

# ***Annual Report***

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# ***Fiscal Year 2020***

## **ALASKA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS**



**Department of Commerce, Community  
and Economic Development**

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**Division of Corporations, Business  
and Professional Licensing**

This annual performance report is presented in accordance with  
Alaska statute AS 08.01.070(10).

Its purpose is to report the accomplishments, activities, and the  
past and present needs of the licensing program.

















**Budget Recommendations for FY 2021 (continued)**

**Travel Required to Perform Examinations**

Not applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$0.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):			
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>

**Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel - AASCB**

#1 Rank in Importance or  Not Applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
Projected January 2021	TBA	3	1	
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
<p>AASCB is an alliance of governmental agencies responsible for the licensure and certification of counselors throughout the United States. Attendance at this meeting allows us to keep current with issues on the national level; work collaboratively toward license portability; network with other state board members to glean helpful ideas to enhance our board service; and give Alaska voice in national decisions affecting Alaska LPCs.</p> <p>Due to the Covid 19 virus, a regulatory summit including AASCB, the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) and the Center for Continuing Education (CCE) was canceled. AASCB plans to reschedule an independent conference in January 2021; the other organizations, however do not plan to reschedule their conferences in FY 2021. Due to AASCB being the only organization of these three to reschedule, we are budgeting and requesting approval for three board members and one staff member to attend this conference.</p>				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$3,400.00	\$1,800.00	\$1,800.00	\$3,400.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$4,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$100.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$100.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$1,400.00	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$1,400.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	\$1,000.00	\$700.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$4315</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$4,315</b>

**Budget Recommendations for FY 2021 (continued)**

**Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel – *Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB)***

#2 Rank in Importance

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
Jan 2021	TBD	2		
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards: The FARB Forum is educationally driven and includes sessions related to administering professional licensing boards. It provides a critical forum for information exchange between regulatory boards to help solve the mutual problems of participating associations as well as engage in activities to improve the standards of professions, the delivery of services, and the services of regulatory boards themselves.				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$1,600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,600.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$900.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$900.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$800.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$700.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$4,100.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,100.00</b>

**Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel - *American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) Annual Conference***

#3 Rank in Importance

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
June 2021	TBA	1	1	
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
The board has adopted the AMHCA's code of ethics as its code of ethics that govern ethical decision making for AK licensed professional counselors. Attendance at this conference enables board representatives to network with representatives of AMHCA, as well as, other licensed professional counselors, in order to stay abreast of best practices and ensure quality professional counseling in the state of AK.				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$1,600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,600.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$800.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$4,100.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,100.00</b>

**Budget Recommendations for FY 2021 (continued)**

**Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel - American Counseling Association Conference 2021: Break Through for Yourself; Your Profession; Your Clients**

#4 Rank in Importance

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
March 18-21, 2021	Orlando, FL	1	1	
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
The American Counseling Association (ACA) – ACA is a non-for-profit, professional and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Attendance at this conference would help board members glean valuable information in how to continue to grow in fostering qualified professional counselors.				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$1,600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,600.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$800.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$4,100.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,100.00</b>

**Non-Travel Budget Requests**

- Not Applicable                       Resources                       Examinations  
 Membership                               Training                               Other

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Membership Dues	AASCB	\$900.00

**Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

This membership type is appropriate for counseling licensure boards and their appointed board members. The membership fee of \$900 includes membership for the Board Administrator and two appointed board members, a subscription to the organization's newsletter, The Liaison, invitations to AASCB programs and meetings, 2 delegate votes (one can be by the Board Administrator) at the Annual Business Meeting, and discounted annual conference fees.

**Budget Recommendations for FY 2021 (continued)**

<b>Other Items with a Fiscal Impact</b>		<b>Cost Per Event:</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Number of Events:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Product or Service</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	
		\$0.00	
<b>Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>			

<b>Summary of FY 2021 Fiscal Requests</b>	
Board Meetings and Teleconferences:	\$9,500.00
Travel for Exams:	\$0.00
Out-of-State and Additional In-State Travel:	\$12,515.00
Dues, Memberships, Resources, Training:	\$900.00
Total Potential Third-Party Offsets:	-\$5,250.00
Other:	\$0.00
<b>Total Requested:</b>	<b>\$17,665.00</b>

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**Legislation Recommendations Proposed Legislation for FY 2021**

**No Recommendations**

The Board has no recommendations for proposed legislation at this time.

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed legislation:

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**Regulation Recommendations Proposed Legislation for FY 2021**

**No Recommendations**

The Board has no recommendations for proposed regulations at this time.

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed regulations:

- 1) Update the Code of Ethics to reflect the latest edition - 2010–2015.
  
- 2) Modify regulation related to the Approved Supervisor qualifications - increase required training to become an approved supervisor from 6 hours to 45 hours of CEU's.
  
- 3) Modify regulation to accept hours of supervised experience by a non-certified approved supervisor once the supervisor becomes approved as an approved supervisor.
  
- 4) Modify required supervision to have a minimum of 1 hour/month of approved supervision.
  
- 5) Modify regulation regarding supervision to be synchronous.

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**Goals and Objectives**

**Part I**

***FY 2020's goals and objectives, and how they were met:***

**1) The board will continue to review the statutes and regulations and work on any changes.**

The board continued its due diligence of reviewing applicable statutes and regulations, as well as working toward achieving changes deemed necessary in order to improve professionalism and provide greater protection for the public. The board worked with the regulation specialist to facilitate the approval of the proposed regulations of FY19. In addition, the board met for emergency meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic virus and evaluated regulations that may pose a hindrance to services, and proposed emergency regulations to increase accessibility and provision of services during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

**2) The board will continue to review applications for licensing Professional Counselors by credentials and examination, for Approved Counselor Supervisors, as well as audit for continuing education.**

The board continued to review applications for licensed Professional Counselors, for approved Counselor Supervisors, and CEU audits in-between meetings by secure-portal ballots uploaded onto On-Board's secure site. This fostered public safety as well as licensure timeliness. The board has continued to review all applications, utilizing the statutes and regulations as the basis for its decisions. Each application has been reviewed individually and thoroughly to ensure public safety.

**3) The board will continue to send delegates to national conferences and/or trainings in FY 20. The board has listed the beneficial conferences in order of priority:**

- a)** The American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB) and The National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) – Counseling Regulatory Boards Summit (Joint Conference) (#1)
- b)** The American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) (#2)
- c)** Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) Annual Forum (#3)
- d)** The Council on Licensure, Enforcement & Regulation (CLEAR) Annual Educational Conference (#4)

The board was approved for travel for the first conference mentioned above. Licensing Examiner, Andy Khmelev and Board Chair, Debbie Hamilton were able to attend the summit sponsored by NBCC and AASCB in Washington DC. Both found this conference highly valuable to enhancing the quality of the board. The AMHCA conference was canceled for in-person attendance due to the Covid-19 virus, but re-scheduled as a webinar. The conference is scheduled for 6/20 and a request for attendance for the webinars is being sought. Notification of approval will be received following the submission of this report. No other conferences were approved or attended.

**4) The board will continue to monitor disciplinary actions.**

Individual board members have worked collaboratively with the board investigator(s) to review cases involving jurisdictional questions, and to give guidance on need for further review and/or disciplinary sanctions. According to the investigations department, twenty-four cases were opened and thirteen cases have been closed; five out of the thirteen cases closed were reviewed by board members.

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**Goals and Objectives (continued)**

**Part I (continued)**

***FY 2020's goals and objectives, and how they were met:***

**5) The board will continue to monitor its proposed regulation changes regarding approved counselor supervisors.**

In an effort to increase professionalism and protection for the public, the board has proposed a regulation change that will increase the required CEU training in order to become an AK approved supervisor. The progress of this regulation was reviewed at the March 2020 board meeting and is expected to be finalized at the September 2020 board meeting

**6) The board will continue to work for consistency in licensing by credential under 08.29.120.**

The board proposed a regulation revision that would bring consistency between CEU's required for licensing renewal for AK licensees and applicants for Licensing by Credential.

**7) The board will monitor the activity of the Alaska Counseling Association (AKCA) should one be restarted by professional counselors, and will consider support of any legislation put forward by a new state counseling association.**

Our board liaison continued to reach out to the Alaska Counseling Association (AKCA), however, the association continues to be inactive.

**8) The board will monitor licensing fees for LPC applications and renewals.**

The board is pleased to report that they have been operating with financial solvency over the past few fiscal years and were able to recommend substantial renewal fee reduction to the division which was approved and implemented for the most recent renewal cycle ending 10/31/19.

**9) The board will monitor issues of portability.**

The board believes that AK has a and timely pathway toward licensure for licensees holding equivalent licenses out of state. The board was able to send two delegates to the American Association for State Counseling Regulatory Boards (AASCB) annual meeting where issues of portability were further discussed among varying state attendees. It is incredibly valuable to have voices and ears at these round table discussions.

**10) The board will continue to meet quarterly.**

The board was approved for two face to face meetings and one teleconference meeting. The board met in person at the September 2019 meeting, but had to cancel the December meeting due to a lack of quorum and while they were initially approved for an in-person meeting in March 2019, due to the Covid-19 virus emergency and travel restrictions, the meeting was held by teleconference. As mentioned previously, the board feels that it can conduct its most effective work during in person meetings.



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**Goals and Objectives**

**Part II**

**FY 2021's goals and objectives, and proposed methods to achieve them.**

***Describe any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and required resources:***

- 1) The board will continue to review the statutes and regulations and work on revisions that would provide both protection to the public, as well as streamlined and efficient pathways to licensure. The board will monitor the potential impact that the statutes and regulations may have on military families and will work to foster non-impeded pathways to licensure.**

The board plans to continue reviewing relevant statutes and regulations and to discuss and work on changes as deemed necessary.

- 2) The board will continue to review applications for licensing Professional Counselors by credential and examination, for Approved Counselor Supervisors, as well as, audit for continuing education.** For the protection of the public, it is imperative that the board closely review applications for licensing Professional Counselors and for approving Counselor Supervisors. It is our duty to make certain we evaluate each application file thoroughly to ensure the applicant is qualified as per the statutes and regulations of our State and per the high standard of excellence we expect from the clinicians of our State. It is also imperative that licensed professional counselors continue to develop and refine their skills by completing continuing education.

- 3) The board will continue to send delegates to national conferences and/or trainings in FY 21. The board has listed the beneficial conferences in order of priority.:**

- a) The American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB)**
- b) Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) Annual Forum (#2)**
- c) The American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) (#3)**
- d) The America Counseling Association (ACA) Conference (#4)**

The Board will continue to work on prioritizing board travel to conferences and training, reviewing the prioritized list and determining what training is needed and required to enable us to best serve the public as informed members.

- 4) The board will continue to monitor disciplinary actions.**

The board monitors disciplinary actions, ensuring that all terms of the action are completed. These activities are done by utilizing the resources provided by the division, such as the board investigator and reports.

- 5) The board will continue to monitor its proposed regulation changes regarding approved counselor supervisors.**

The board will continue to monitor the proposed regulation changes necessary to ensure competency and professionalism in AK approved counselor supervisors.

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**Goals and Objectives (continued)**

**Part II (continued)**

**FY 2021's goals and objectives, and proposed methods to achieve them.**

***Describe any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and required resources:***

**6) The board will continue to work for consistency in licensing by credential under 08.29.120.**

The board will continue to review all applications, utilizing the statutes and regulations as the basis for its decisions. Each application will continue to be reviewed individually and thoroughly to ensure public safety.

**7) The board will monitor the activity of the Alaska Counseling Association (AKCA) should one be restarted by professional counselors.**

The board is hopeful professional counselors in Alaska will unite to form a new counseling association. In the event that happens, we will readily assign a liaison to attend any meetings, will encourage the association's members to attend board meetings, and will work to foster a mutual and cooperative exchange of information regarding issues affecting counselors in Alaska.

**8) The board will monitor licensing fees for LPC applications and renewals.**

The board will continue to monitor biannual licensing fees – whether they are reasonable and affordable for Alaska counselors – as well as continuing to monitor fiscal efficiency to ensure the solvency of our board. The board's review(s) of dues will be shared with the division.

**9) The board will monitor issues of portability.**

The board will send members to national conferences in order to stay abreast of the latest discussions and legislation related to licensure portability.

**10) The board will continue to meet quarterly.**

The board will continue to meet quarterly in order to progress efficiently with processing all forms of applications, address issues pertaining to regulations, monitor the budget, address issues related to investigations, and to address issues that may arise regarding the counseling profession to ensure the highest level of practice in the profession of counseling and ensure public safety.

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**Sunset Audit Recommendations**

**Date of Last Legislative Audit:** 2018

**Board Sunset Date:** 2026

**Audit Recommendation:** The Board received no new recommendations.

**Action Taken:** n/a

**Next Steps:** n/a

**Date Completed:** n/a