



School Social Work Association of America

SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Purpose of the SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

National Certification for School Social Work (NCSSW™) enables School Social Workers to demonstrate the skills and competencies needed for the provision of high-quality services in schools. NCSSW™ is designed to promote consistency, to guide graduate education, credentialing, and professional practice, as well as the evaluation of services. School social workers are empowered within a coherent framework to guide advocacy efforts and service delivery.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide resources for state associations and school social workers to promote and pass legislation acknowledging NCSSW™ as an equivalent standard to teachers and other professional national certifications. The [SSWAA Macro Advocacy Toolkit](#) provides a fundamental framework for developing and implementing advocacy efforts. This toolkit provides the specific resources and materials that can be used to advocate for NCSSW™ in states and districts.

Acknowledgment

SSWAA would like to acknowledge the work of members who have worked to provide documents and resources for the SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work.

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SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Section 1: SSWAA Macro Advocacy Toolkit

As leaders of our profession, SSWAA hopes to empower you to find your advocacy comfort level and to reach beyond it. This toolkit will provide tools to increase your knowledge about how to be an effective advocate for the children and families you serve and how to promote the role, expertise, and value that school social workers bring to the educational team.

Each module provides the components to develop a strategic plan around the macro-level advocacy for state associations or leadership teams. This toolkit is a framework for developing an advocacy and legislative action plan. You may need to modify the implementation based on your needs, resources, and association or leadership team structure.

To access the toolkit, click the link: [SSWAA Macro Advocacy Toolkit](#)

Utilizing the SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Using the SSWAA Macro Advocacy tools and framework, more specific details about *National Certification for School Social Work*[™] advocacy are provided throughout this toolkit.

SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Section 2: National Certification for School Social Work Fact Sheet

The *National Certification for School Social Work™ Fact Sheet* is useful in providing an overall general overview of NCSSW™. For SSW practitioners, this is a starting point for developing talking points and becoming experts in the area. You may consider doing additional research on the issue to discuss state-specific statistics, impacts, resources, and needs. This can also be shared with others who are allies (e.g., associations, legislators, teachers, school counselors, and school psychologists), depending on your strategic approach to advocating this issue.

A screenshot of the fact sheet is below, and a link to the fact sheet can be found by clicking [here](#).

NATIONAL SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK CERTIFICATION

National Certified School Social Worker™ (NCSSW) is an advanced certification awarded through the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) to school social workers who demonstrate mastery of the National School Social Work Practice Model competencies.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

National Certification enables School Social Workers to demonstrate the skills and competencies needed for the provision of high-quality services in schools. NCSSW™ is designed to promote consistency, to guide graduate education, credentialing, and professional practice, as well as the evaluation of services. School social workers are empowered within a coherent framework to guide advocacy efforts and service delivery.

IMPACT

National certification is an indication of a highly qualified professional that:

- Recognizes the mastery of the National School Social Work Practice Model competencies
- Implements nationally recognized school social work standards
- Promotes best practices in SSW service delivery to students, families, schools, and communities
- Demonstrates commitment to impacting social, emotional, behavioral, mental health, and academic outcomes
- Acknowledges dedication to equity, social justice, and access to quality education to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed
- Recognizes the School Social Work National Certification as an equivalent national certification to other education professions

TAKE ACTION

- Propose legislation that recognizes the School Social Work National Certification as equivalent to the National Board Certification for Teachers, School Counselors, and School Psychologists
- Work with your school district and state department of education to recognize national certification as the common standard for advanced school social work practice

FOR MORE INFORMATION



School Social Work
Association of America

www.sswaa.org/national-certification

Contactus@sswaa.org

SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Section 3: National Certification for School Social Work Comparisons

A side-by-side comparison with other educational professional national certification processes can be useful in advocating for NCSSW™ as an equivalent national certification.

Nationally Certified School Social Worker (NCSSW™)	National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)	Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP)	Nationally Certified School Counselor (NCSC)
Awarded By			
School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA)	The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)	National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)	National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)
About			
The NCSSW™ is a credential awarded through the National School Social Work Certification System of the School Social Work Association of America, which is an independent, not-for-profit professional organization that created the NCSSW™ for the purpose of credentialing school social workers who meet rigorous, nationally recognized standards of graduate preparation, ethical and professional practice, and continuing professional development.	The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan, and nongovernmental organization. It was created in 1987 with the purpose of advancing the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching, creating a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards, and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts.	The NCSP is a credential awarded through the National School Psychology Certification System of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), which is an independent, not-for-profit professional organization that created the NCSP for the purpose of credentialing school psychologists who meet rigorous, nationally recognized standards of graduate preparation, ethical and professional practice, and continuing professional development.	The NCSC is a credential awarded through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The NBCC is an independent, not-for-profit credentialing body, which was incorporated in 1982, whose purpose is to establish and monitor a national certification system, to identify for professionals and the public those counselors who have voluntarily sought and obtained certification, and to maintain a register of those counselors

Why Become Nationally Certified?

<p>National Certification enables School Social Workers to demonstrate the skills and competencies needed for the provision of high-quality services in schools. NCSSW™ is designed to promote consistency, guide graduate education, credentialing, and professional practice, as well as the evaluation of services. School social workers are empowered within a coherent framework to guide advocacy efforts and service delivery.</p>	<p>NBPTS Certification is a way for the teaching profession to define and recognize highly accomplished practice. Teachers who achieve National Board Certification have met high standards through study, expert evaluation, self-assessment, and peer review.</p>	<p>The NCSP credential aims to promote excellence in the field of school psychology by acknowledging school psychologists who meet rigorous nationally recognized standards of graduate preparation, ethical practice, and competency.</p>	<p>The National Certified School Counselor (NCSC) is a specialty credential that recognizes counselors who possess a minimum of a master’s degree in counseling with coursework in school counseling and who have passed a challenging national application and examination process. NCSCs have a strong commitment to the school counseling profession and to providing high-quality services to students, parents, teachers, and communities.</p>
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Advantages

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognition of the mastery of the National School Social Work Practice Model competencies 2. Implementation of nationally recognized school social work standards 3. Promotion of best practices in SSW service delivery to students, families, schools, and communities 4. Demonstration of commitment to impacting social, emotional, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthens practice. 2. Helps students succeed. 3. Builds leadership skills. 4. Helps expand influence and expertise with regard to curricular decisions and policies. 5. Helps advance careers. 6. Provides portability. 7. Offers higher salary potential. 8. Enhances education. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advances graduate preparation and practice standards to promote best practices in service to children and youth 2. Provides uniform national standards to measure professional qualifications 3. Encourages continuing professional growth and development 4. Enhances 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification as master’s level counseling practitioners who work in school settings 2. Recognition by other mental health professionals as experts on the mental health needs of today’s school children and adolescents 3. Demonstration of an ongoing commitment to high-quality school counseling services through
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<p>behavioral, mental health, and academic outcomes</p> <p>5. Dedication to equity, social justice, and access to quality education to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.</p> <p>6. Recognition of the School Social Work National Certification as an equivalent national certification</p>	<p>9. Meets most states' definition of "highly qualified teacher" under NCLB.</p>	<p>professional opportunities for credentialed school psychologists</p> <p>5. Facilitates state certification through reciprocity with states that accept the NCSP</p>	<p>continuing education</p> <p>4. Salary increases in an increasing number of states and school systems across the country</p>
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Requirements for Certification

<p>To qualify, candidates must complete the following:</p> <p>Education Hold an MSW degree</p> <p>Experience Have at least 4 years post-MSW experience as a School Social Worker or SSW educator in higher education</p> <p>Certification Hold current active Masters level licensure or certification in the state for a school social work position</p> <p>Membership Have an active</p>	<p>To qualify, candidates must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a Bachelor's degree. 2. Have completed three full years of teaching / counseling experience. 3. Possess a valid state teaching or counseling license for that period of time, or, if teaching where a license is not required, have taught in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state. <p>In all 25 certificate areas, candidates are required to complete an assessment</p>	<p>To qualify, candidates must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete a minimum of 60 graduate semester hours (e.g., specialist level) in an organized program of study officially titled "School Psychology". 2. Complete a supervised practicum and a culminating 1,200 clock-hour supervised internship, with a minimum of 600 hours in a school setting. 3. Obtain a passing score on the Praxis National School 	<p>To qualify, candidates must complete the following:</p> <p>Education Master's degree in counseling consisting of at least 48 semester hours of graduate-level credit, with specific required coursework across 9 content areas</p> <p>Supervision Have at least 100 hours of post-graduate school counseling supervision.</p> <p>Professional Endorsement Obtain endorsement from a professional colleague who holds a master's degree or higher in a mental</p>
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<p>SSWAA membership at the Full or Premiere level</p>	<p>comprised of four components: (1) Content Knowledge; (2) Differentiation in Instruction; (3) Teaching Practice and Learning Environment; (4) Effective and Reflective Practitioner</p>	<p>Psychologist Examination administered by the Educational Testing Service.</p> <p>Graduates of NASP-approved/ accredited programs have met all coursework requirements for the NCSP.</p> <p>All other applicants must provide a portfolio documenting knowledge and skills across all domains of professional practice, as defined in the NASP Practice Model.</p>	<p>health field.</p> <p>Work Experience Complete 3,000 hours of post-graduate counseling work experience over a two-year period.</p> <p>Examination: passing score on the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE)</p> <p>Several requirements are waived for graduates from CACREP-accredited programs.</p>
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Cost

<p>The application fee for NCSSW™ is \$250.</p>	<p>The registration fee is \$75 for each assessment cycle and \$475 for each of the four components (total \$1900).</p> <p>Retake attempts require an additional fee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$475 per attempt for two to three components) ● \$125 per exercise and/or the Selected Response section for one component 	<p>Initial certification fees vary depending on membership status and whether the applicant graduated from a NASP-approved or accredited program. NASP-approved / accredited program graduate fees for initial certification are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$60 (student, 1st year, leave of absence) ● \$85 (2nd year in practice) ● \$110 (full member) ● \$210 (nonmember) 	<p>An application fee of \$295. The NCSC application and examination fee may vary depending upon postmark date and exam status. Please check the website for the most up-to-date information. There is also an Examination fee.</p>
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		There is also an examination fee payable to ETS.	
Renewal Requirements			
<p>The National Certified School Social Worker™ is valid for 3 years. Prior to the expiration date, the NCSSW™ must submit an application for renewal, with proof of maintaining membership in SSWAA at the Full or Premiere level, proof of licensure or certification at the Masters level in social work/school social work required to practice school social work in that state, and proof of continuing education units earned over the 3 year period.</p> <p>NCSSWs that qualify for renewal will need to submit and pass reflection statements and artifacts for two of the nine school social work model competencies in a recertification course.</p>	<p>NBCT achieved before 2017 is valid for a period of 10 years. Certifications after 2017 are valid for a period of 5 years. The National Board has revised its policy from renewal to Maintenance of Certification (MOC). Renewal applicants must currently hold a valid teaching license in the state in which they are working and must demonstrate their PreK–12 teaching experience. Renewal submission is called the Profile of Professional Growth (PPG). This can begin as early as your first year of certification and consists of a single submission composed of three interrelated components and a reflection. The total fee for certificate renewal is \$1,250.00 for each attempt.</p>	<p>NCSPs must engage in activities designed to maintain, expand, and extend their professional training and skills. Specifically, each NCSP must be renewed every three years with 75 contact hours of continuing professional development (CPD) activities. 10 of the 75 CPD hours must come from NASP- or APA-approved providers. NCSPs must also accrue 3 hours of CPD regarding ethical practice and/or the legal regulation of school psychology. The renewal fees are \$99 for NASP Members or \$199 for nonmembers.</p>	<p>Nationally Certified School Counselors are required to provide documentation of completion of 1. Annual maintenance of \$30.00 during each 5-year certification period 2. 125 contact clock hours from the 10 approved content areas of continuing education over the five-year period.</p>

SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Section 4: National Certification for School Social Work Sample Legislation

When discussing legislation, it can be helpful to provide a starting point for legislators to guide the direction of the bill. When we ask for something without providing guidance, it can be driven by other groups whose interests might not align with ours. Below are two samples that can be used as a starting point for NCSSW™. The first version is for states that do not recognize any professional national certification. The second version is for states that recognize other educational professions but do not currently include school social work.

Version 1: For a state with no current legislation supporting national certification for any educational professional

A BILL FOR AN ACT CONCERNING STIPENDS FOR NATIONAL BOARD-CERTIFIED EDUCATORS.

Current law requires the Department of Education (department) to award an annual stipend of *[Insert Stipend Amount]* to teachers, school counselors, principals, school psychologists, school librarians, and school social workers who hold national board certification and who are employed by a school district, board of cooperative services, area education agency, a charter school of a school district, or an institute charter school (local education provider).

The department shall award an additional *[Insert Stipend Amount]* annual stipend to teachers, principals, school counselors, school psychologists, school librarians, and school social workers who are employed in a low-performing, high-needs school. The additional *[Insert Stipend Amount]* stipend is also extended to teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, school librarians, and school social workers (national board-certified educators) who are employed in a rural school district.

If a national board-certified educator transfers employment from one low-performing, high-needs school or rural school district to another low-performing, high-needs school or rural school district, the educator remains eligible for the additional stipend. However, if a national board-certified educator leaves employment with a low-performing, high-needs school or rural school district, the educator is no longer eligible for the additional stipend.

If there are insufficient funds, the department shall reduce the amount of each stipend by the same percentage that the deficit bears to the amount required to fully fund the total number of national board-certified educators who qualify for the stipend. A national board-certified educator who is employed as a principal or an administrator in a school and maintains a national certification is eligible for a stipend.

A nationally certified school social worker is defined as a certified school social worker who also holds a certification from the National Association of Social Workers or the School Social Work Association of America.

As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a. "local education provider" means *[Insert state's definition]*

- b. "national board-certified educator" means: beginning with the *[insert next budget year]* budget year
 - a. teachers who hold a certification from the national board for professional teaching standards;
 - b. school counselors who hold a certification from the National Board for Certified Counselors;
 - c. nationally certified school psychologists who hold a certification from the National Association of School Psychologists;
 - d. school librarians who hold a certification from the national board for professional teaching standards, and
 - e. nationally certified school social workers who hold a certification from the National Association of Social Workers or the School Social Work Association of America.

Version 2: For a state with current legislation supporting national certification for educational professionals other than school social workers,

Add to the list of eligible professions or anywhere specific professions are mentioned: "and school social workers."

Add to definitions the following language: "A nationally certified school social worker is defined as a certified school social worker who also holds a certification from the National Association of Social Workers or the School Social Work Association of America."

SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Section 5: National Certification for School Social Work Sample Letter to Legislators

The letter below provides a sample that can be utilized for associations and individual school social workers to send to state legislators asking for support in NCSSW™. It might also be helpful to engage other education professionals in sending letters to support national certification, especially where no professional recognition exists.

Where current national certification exists,

I am *[Insert name]*, an *[Insert State Association]* member. As you know, we are facing a school personnel shortage nationally and in *[Insert state]*. This shortage includes our Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP), representing our school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists. At *[Insert State or District]*, we cannot replace the number of school social workers and school psychologists at the rate they are retiring or leaving our district. To recognize, recruit, and retain highly qualified professionals in *[Insert State's]* schools, *[Insert State Association]* is proposing establishing a “national board certification compensation program” for school social workers, school psychologists, and school counselors that mirrors the current *[Insert State]* teacher national board certification recognition and stipend program, *[Insert Current State Law or Educational Code]*. National certification is an advanced certification awarded to professionals who demonstrate mastery of their professional competencies through their respective national associations. With a system already in place in Iowa for national teacher certification, the resources needed to establish and implement the recognition and compensation for our SISPs would be minimal. The impact, however, of having national certification recognition and compensation for SISPs in *[Insert State]* will have significant long-lasting implications for our schools, students, and families as more SISPs obtain the high standards of being nationally certified.

I would like to know if you are willing to commit to creating a national certification parity for our Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) that mirrors the current teacher program for school social workers, school psychologists, and school counselors. For FY 2023, an increase in the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program appropriation of *[Insert Amount]* is requested. The new funds for our highly qualified school social workers, school psychologists, and school counselors who hold national certifications would be made available on the same basis as the current program.

National certification parity is one step we can take now that would immediately impact recognizing, recruiting, and retaining our highly qualified Specialized Instructional Support Personnel in *[Insert state]* schools.

Please contact me to set up a time to discuss this potential legislation further.

Where no current national certification exists,

I am *[Insert name]*, an *[Insert State Association]* member. As you know, we are facing a school personnel shortage nationally and in *[Insert state]*. This shortage includes our Teachers, School Librarians, and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP), representing our school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists. At *[Insert State or District]*, we cannot replace the number of teachers, school librarians, school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists at the rate they are retiring or leaving our district. To recognize, recruit, and retain highly qualified professionals in *[Insert State's]* schools, *[Insert*

State Association] is proposing establishing a “national board certification compensation program” for teachers, school librarians, school counselors, and school social workers.

National certification is an advanced certification awarded to professionals who demonstrate mastery of their professional competencies through their respective national associations. The resources needed to establish and implement the recognition and compensation for our teachers, school librarians, and SISPs should be allocated in the state budget in the amount of *[Insert Amount]*. The impact, however, of having national certification recognition and compensation for these highly trained professionals in *[Insert State]* will have significant long-lasting implications for our schools, students, and families as more educational professionals obtain the high standards of being nationally certified.

I would like to discuss your willingness to introduce legislation that supports a national certification recognition and compensation program for our nationally certified educational professionals. For FY *[Insert year]*, an appropriation of *[Insert Amount]* is requested.

National certification parity is one step we can take now that would immediately impact recognizing, recruiting, and retaining our highly qualified educational professionals in *[Instert state]* schools.

Please contact me to set up a time to discuss this potential legislation further.

SSWAA Advocacy Toolkit: National Certification for School Social Work

Section 6: National Certification for School Social Work FAQ

The National Certified School Social Worker FAQ document provides overall information about NCSSW™. It can be used to provide additional information in advocating for national certification and also to share why SSWAA's school Social Work certification is a better fit for those looking to demonstrate advanced school social work competencies.



NCSSW

National Certified School Social Worker

School Social Work Association of America

National Certified School Social Worker™

The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) is a non-profit, professional membership organization that offers National Certification for School Social Workers™ (NCSSW™). National certification does not replace entry-level certification required by most state departments of education to enter the field. Instead, it is advanced certification that indicates that a school social worker has mastered competencies described in the National School Social Work Practice Model.

The SSWAA School Social Work Practice Model describes the skills and services needed for the delivery of high-quality social work services in schools. The model is designed to promote consistency, to guide graduate education, credentialing, and professional practice, as well as the evaluation of services. The model further empowers school social workers with a coherent framework to guide advocacy efforts and service delivery decisions. Adherence to the model is essential to qualify for national certification.

National Certified School Social Worker™ (NCSSW™) is awarded through SSWAA to identify school social work professionals who have voluntarily sought and obtained an advanced certification that demonstrates mastery of competencies of the SSWAA National School Social Work Practice Model.



School Social Work
Association of America



NCSSW
National Certified School Social Worker
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National Certified School Social Worker™ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1 National Certified School Social Worker™

1. **How will candidates benefit from national certification?** National Certification should be recognized as the common standard for advanced school social work service provision. While each state has its own licensure tests and standards, the SSWAA National Certification will demonstrate an advanced level of understanding and expertise in School Social Work, equivalent to the National Board Certification for Teachers, School Counselors, and School Psychologists.
2. **How is National Certified School Social Worker™ different from my state social work license or state school social work license/certification?** National Certified School Social Worker™ is an advanced certification that is both post-MSW and requires four (4) years of experience in the field as a school social worker or school social work Educator. This is not an entry level certification such as the one required in the candidate's state for social work practice or to become a school social worker.
3. **How is National Certified School Social Worker™ different from NASW's Certified School Social Work Specialist (C-SSWS)?** The C-SSWS was developed to fill the gap for states whose state Department of Education does not offer licensure or certification for school social workers. It was created as an entry-level certification requiring two years of supervised experience as a school social worker. SSWAA's National Certified School Social Worker™ is an advanced certification for school social workers with four years post-Masters experience in the field.
4. **Why get certified?** School social workers have an opportunity to help shape the future of the field. Advanced certification for school social workers will make us more visible, viable and valued in an education setting where national advanced certification is recognized and rewarded. You have the opportunity to be the first in your district, or in your state, to demonstrate your advanced skills by earning a nationally recognized certificate and to use that certification to bring the profession of school social work to the level of other national certification programs, in contract negotiations and equitable compensation.



2 Application Process

5. **How much does SSWAA National Certification cost?** \$250 is the cost to become an NCSSW Candidate. With your NCSSW Candidacy you will have a one (1) year timeframe to complete all competencies required for certification.
6. **Do I have to be a member of SSWAA?** Yes, to become a candidate for national certification you need to be a member at the full or premiere level. For SSWAA membership prices and information go to <https://www.sswaa.org/sswaa-membership> . To maintain your national certification, you will need to maintain your membership each year.
7. **What are the requirements for application to be a candidate for national certification?**
Candidates must have:
 1. Have an MSW from a CSWE accredited social work program.
 2. At least 4 years post-MSW experience as a School Social Worker or SSW educator in higher education
 3. Current active licensure or certification required in the state for a school social work position. Licensure as a Master's Level Social Worker will be considered in lieu of DOE licensure in state's in which there is no requirement for school social workers. This licensure will be considered in conjunction with the years of experience requirement.
 4. Active SSWAA membership at the Full or Premiere level
8. **How do candidates apply for national certification?** Go to <https://www.sswaa.org/national-certification> scroll down the page and click on "Apply Register Today".
 1. **Fill out the registration form** and log in as necessary (Please note you must have an active membership to apply. If you are not a member join SSWAA first as a Full or Premiere member then return to this page). Select "pay by invoice" and submit.
 - i. **What do I need for the Application:**
 - **Employer Verification** (note: sample employment verification form is available)
 - **Current Resume**
 - **Copy of your licenses/certifications**
 - **Brief Bio (400 characters or less)**
 - **Professional headshot**
 - **Cover letter**
 - ii. **Watch for a confirmation email** which will contain a link to the application form.
 - iii. **Once your application has been reviewed and approved you will receive an email** regarding approval and will be asked to pay the registration fee via invoice.

3 National Certification Process

9. **How long do I have to complete the national certification portfolio process?** You have one year upon approval in the course to complete the process. If you have any questions about your start date, email pdlearning@sswaa.org to confirm that date.
10. **How many competency statements with supporting artifacts do I need to submit?** Nine competencies are required with supportive artifacts, to match the nine competencies associated with the [National School Social Work Practice Model](#)



11. **Which version of the National School Social Work Practice Model will I be using for this process?** The National Model will be updated as needed. Candidates will focus on the model that is in use by SSWAA at the time they become a candidate for national certification.
12. **How long does it take to complete one competency statement?** This depends on whether the candidate has already implemented activities that demonstrate skills measured in the performance indicators or if they need to implement them prior to writing the reflection statement and submitting artifacts. This also depends on the time the candidate can commit to identifying artifacts and writing the statement. In general, candidates shared that it takes about 10 hours to write one competency statement.
13. **Do the nine competencies have to be completed in order?** No, candidates may submit their reflection and artifacts in any order.
14. **How soon are competency statements and artifacts rated following submission?** Reviewers have committed to providing candidates feedback within two weeks of submission.
15. **Do I need to submit all nine of the competency statements and artifacts before receiving feedback from reviewers?** No, candidates may submit one reflection statement with artifacts at a time, await feedback, then submit another reflection statement with artifacts and/or submit as many as they want at one time.
16. **What happens at the one-year point if a candidate does not complete the national certification process?** Prior to the year's end, the candidate can submit a request to continue, explaining why they were unable to meet the one-year deadline. The SSWAA Committee will review the request and make a determination as to whether or not to allow an extension. If an extension is approved, the candidate will pay a \$50 fee to continue for another year. If the request is denied, an appeals process is available. This would require sending a letter to the SSWAA Professional Development Committee who makes a recommendation to the SSWAA Board.

4 National Certification Course

17. **Will I interact with my colleagues during this course?** Interaction with NCSSW Candidate peers is optional. There is an opportunity to post on the discussion board to share tips or ask for tips from other candidates. There is also a Facebook page for candidates to interact. Information about the Facebook page is included in an email candidates receive after being accepted to the process.
18. **What support is available to candidates during the national certification process?** The raters are available to support you through 1:1 meetings, small group meetings of interested candidates, or in other ways you deem would be helpful in the process. Reach out to PDlearning@sswaa.org for support!



5 National Certification Renewal

19. **How often does the SSWAA National Certification need to be renewed?** National School Social Work Certification™ lasts for 3 years and will need to prior to the end of Year 3. Instructions for recertifying are provided at <https://www.sswaa.org/national-certification>.
20. **What does a National Certified School Social Worker™ need to do to maintain certification?** A National Certified School Social Worker™ needs to maintain membership in SSWAA at the full or premiere level and maintain a state social work/school social work license or certification. If the state school social work or social work license/certification(s) do not require earning CEUs each year, the NCSSW will need to track the earning of 10 CEUs per year (30 CEUs total) for the recertification process.
21. **What do I need to do to renew the certification?** To renew certification, National Certified School Social Workers will need to pay a \$100 renewal fee and submit two (2) competency statements and artifacts to demonstrate mastery of two of the nine competencies in the years since certification.

6 SSWAA and National Certification

22. **What is SSWAA doing to create value around certification?** The SSWAA Legislative Committee along with the Standards and Practice committee are developing a toolkit to help both state school social work associations and individual school social workers promote the value of national certification for the profession to their district and state legislators. Watch for the availability of that toolkit.
23. **What can state associations do to create value around certification?** While SSWAA is developing a toolkit for state associations, it will be up to the state associations to engage their members in moving forward amendments to state legislation/regulations to recognize SSWAA National certification as equivalent to NASP, ASCA and NBPTS national certification.
24. **What can I do to create value around certification?** While SSWAA is developing a toolkit for individual members, it will be up to the individuals to engage their school district in moving forward amendments to policies to recognize SSWAA National certification as equivalent to NASP, ASCA and NBPTS national certifications.

7 How Does National Certification for School Social Workers™ Compare to Other Professions?

	National Certified School Social Worker™ (NCSSW)	Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP)	National Certified School Counselor (NCSC)	National Board-Certified Teacher
Credentialing Body	School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA)	National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)	National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
History of Credential	SSWAA is a non-profit, professional membership organization that offers National Certification (NCSSW) specific to School Social Workers. National Certification does not replace entry-level certification require by state departments of education to enter the field. Instead, it is an <i>ADVANCED</i> certification that indicates mastery in competencies described by the National School Social Work Practice Model.	NASP is an independent, for-profit professional organization who created the NCSP for the purpose of credentialing school psychologists who meet rigorous nationally recognized standards of graduate preparation, ethical and professional practice, and continuing professional development.	NBCC is an independent, not-for-profit credentialing body, which was incorporated for the purpose of setting up and monitoring a national certification system, to identify counselors who have voluntarily sought out and obtained certification, and to maintain a registry of all NCSCs.	NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan, and nongovernmental organization created to advance the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching, and creating a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards.
“The Why?” Behind Becoming Nationally Certified	NCSSW is centered around a comprehensive portfolio process for <i>ADVANCED</i> school social work practitioners, including the nine (9) competencies associated with the National School Social Work Model. The School Social Work Practice Model describes the evidence-based, rigorous, peer-reviewed, and essential skills and services needed for high-quality social work services in schools. The model	NCSP aims to promote excellence in the field of school psychology by acknowledging school psychologists who meet rigorous nationally recognized standards of graduate preparation, ethical practice, and competency. This certification is focused on advancing graduate practices to prepare and promote best practices in service to children and youth, provides uniform	NCSC is a specialty credential which recognizes counselors who possess a minimum of a master’s degree in counseling with coursework in school counseling and have passed their national application and examination process. NCSCs have a strong commitment to the school counseling profession and to providing high quality services to students, parents, teachers,	NBPTS is a certification for teaching professionals that defines and recognizes highly accomplished practice. Teachers who achieve NBPTS have met high standards through study, evaluation, self-assessment, and peer review. The process of applying for an earning a NBPTS includes a focus on strengthening practice, promoting student success,



	<p>promotes consistency to guide graduate education, credentialing, and professional practice. This model further empowers school social workers with a coherent framework to guide advocacy efforts, continue to enhance the field through professional development focused on service delivery decisions, and provision of ethical practice.</p>	<p>national standards of measure, encourages continuing professional growth and development, and enhances the professional opportunities for credentialing.</p>	<p>and communities. This certification recognizes a counselor as having knowledge on the mental health needs of school children and adolescents, demonstration of an ongoing commitment to high quality services, and advocates for salary increases in school systems across the U.S.</p>	<p>building leadership, helping to expand influence and expertise with regard to curricular decisions and policies, helps advance careers, provides portability, offers higher salary potential, enhances education, and meets most states' definition of "highly qualified teacher" under the NCLB.</p>
<p>Certification Process</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold at least a master's degree in social work (MSW) from a CSWE Accredited college of social work. 2. <i>ADVANCED</i> practice knowledge through a minimum of 4-years post-MSW experiences as a School Social Worker or School Social Work Educator in Higher Education. 3. Current, active licensure/certification in their state with a School Social Work position. 4. Complete the rigorous portfolio process demonstrating mastery in the nine (9) competencies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete a minimum of 60-graduate semester hours in an organized program of study officially titled "School Psychology". 2. Complete a supervised practicum and a culminating 1,200 clock-hour supervised internship with a minimum of 600 hours in a school setting. 3. Obtain a passing score on the Praxis national School Psych Exam. 4. Meet all coursework requirements for NASP approved/accredited programs. (All other candidates must provide a portfolio documenting knowledge and skills across all domains of professional 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold at least a master's degree in counseling consisting of at least 48-semester hours of graduate-level credit, with specific required coursework across the 9 content areas. 2. Complete a minimum of 100 hours of post-graduate school counseling supervision. 3. Obtain endorsement from a professional colleague who holds a master's degree or higher in a mental health field. 4. Complete 3,000 hours of post-grad counseling work experience over a 2-year period. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a bachelor's degree. 2. Complete 3-years of full-time teaching/ counseling experience. 3. Possess a valid state teaching or counseling license for the 3-years teaching experience, or have taught in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state (in states that don't require licensure). 4. Complete assessment of all required certificate areas with all 4 components met. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Component 1- Content Knowledge b. Component 2- Differentiation of Instruction



	<p>associated with the National School Social Work Model.</p> <p>5. Showcase <i>ADVANCED</i> practice knowledge through earning “evident” on all competencies to earn a national certification.</p> <p>6. Maintain ongoing, annual continuing education units through professional development.</p>	<p>practice, defined in the NASP Practice Model.)</p>	<p>5. Obtain a passing score on the NCE or NCMHCE exam.</p> <p>6. Several requirements can be waived for graduates from CACREP-accredited programs.</p>	<p>c. Component 3- Teaching Practice and Learning Environment</p> <p>d. Component 4- Effective and Reflective Practitioner</p>
<p>Cost (Initial Certification)</p>	<p>-\$250 for initial certification.</p> <p>-Candidates have one-year to complete the NCSSW process.</p>	<p>-Initial certification fees range from \$110-\$360, depending on membership status, and whether applicant graduated from NASP approved/accredited program.</p> <p>-Additionally requires fee for the examination.</p>	<p>-Application Fees for Certification range from \$250-\$375, depending on credential and examination registration.</p> <p>-Additionally requires fee for the examination.</p>	<p>-\$75 registration initial fees can for each assessment cycle plus \$475 for each of the four components (total \$1,900).</p> <p>-Retake attempts require an additional fee (\$475 per attempt for components).</p>
<p>Renewal Process & Fees</p>	<p>-NCSSW 3-year Renewal fee \$100</p> <p>- Continue to hold membership in the SSWAA and maintenance of state licensure/certification throughout all 3-years.</p> <p>-Maintain annual Continuing Education Units (CEs) for</p>	<p>-NCSP 3-year renewal fee \$99-\$199 (depending on member or non-member).</p> <p>-Engage in activities designed to maintain, expand, and extend professional training and skills.</p>	<p>-Annual maintenance \$30 during each 5-year recertification period.</p> <p>- 125 contact clock hours from 10 approved content areas of continuing education over the 5-year period.</p>	<p>-NBCT achieved prior to 2017 includes validity of certification for 5-year renewal window.</p> <p>-NBCT achieved after 2017 includes validity of 4-year renewal cycle.</p> <p>-Renewal includes submission through</p>



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	<p>on-going professional development, minimum of 30 CEs required for 3-year renewal. -Submit 2 competencies with artifacts to professional portfolio to demonstrate mastery of a minimum of 2 of the 9 competencies in the years since initial certification.</p>	<p>- 75 contact hours of continuing professional development (CPD) activities. [10 of the 75 must come from NASP- or APA-approved providers. Must also accrue 3 hours of CPD regarding ethical practice in school psych]</p>		<p>either the Profile of Professional Growth (PPG) or Maintenance of Certification (MOC). -Must hold current valid teaching license in state working, continue to demonstrate Pre-k-12 teaching experience. -Renewal fee is \$1,250 for each attempt.</p>
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8 Research

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