

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: S3/18/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1254

By: Representative L. Johnson

By: Senator Irvin

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE A LICENSED PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTITIONER TO PRACTICE INDEPENDENTLY IN THIS STATE; TO REMOVE THE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE PRIVILEGES FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AUTHORIZE A LICENSED PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTITIONER TO PRACTICE INDEPENDENTLY IN THIS STATE; AND TO REMOVE THE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE PRIVILEGES FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 17-97-102(a)(3), concerning the definition of "psychological examiner" relating to the practice of psychology, is amended to read as follows:

(3) "Psychological examiner" means a person who holds himself or herself out to be a psychological examiner or renders to individuals or to the public for remuneration of any service involving the practice of psychology ~~either:~~

~~(A) Independently interviewing or administering and interpreting tests of mental abilities, aptitudes, interests, and personality characteristics for the purposes of psychological evaluation to assist in the determination of diagnosis of mental health disorders or educational or vocational selection, guidance, or placement; or~~

~~(B) Only only under the supervision of a qualified~~



psychologist if the service is not listed in subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section; and

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 17-97-102(a), concerning definitions relating to the practice of psychology, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(5) "Licensed psychological practitioner" means a person who:

(A) Holds himself or herself out to be a licensed psychological practitioner; or

(B) Renders to individuals or to the public for remuneration of any service involving the practice of psychology independently interviewing or administering and interpreting tests of mental abilities, aptitudes, interests, and personality characteristics for the purposes of psychological evaluation to assist in the determination of:

(i) Diagnosis of mental health disorders; or

(ii) Educational or vocational selection, guidance, or placement.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 17-97-303 is amended to read as follows:
17-97-303. Psychological examiners – Application – Qualifications.

(a) ~~Any~~ A person wishing to obtain the right to practice as a psychological examiner who has not heretofore been licensed to do so shall make application to the Arkansas Psychology Board through the Chair of the Arkansas Psychology Board upon a form and in the manner as shall be adopted and prescribed by the board and shall obtain from the board a license to do so.

(b)(1) A candidate for a license shall furnish the board with satisfactory evidence that he or she:

(A) Has a master's degree in psychology or a closely related field from an accredited educational institution recognized by the board as maintaining satisfactory standards;

(B) Is competent as a psychological examiner as shown by passing examinations, written or oral, or both, as the board deems necessary;

(C) Is not considered by the board to be engaged in unethical practice;

(D) Has applied for a criminal background check and has

not been found guilty of or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any of the offenses listed in § 17-3-102; and

(E) Has not failed an examination given by the board within the preceding six (6) months.

(2) At its discretion, the board may accept satisfactory substitute training and experience in lieu of that prescribed in subdivision (b)(1) of this section.

(c) The board shall apply through its rules the qualifications of supervising psychologists and the restrictions and reporting requirements of supervision so as to implement the intent of this chapter without restricting the professional integrity of the psychological examiner and psychologist or the ultimate responsibility of the supervising psychologist.

~~(d)(1)(A) A psychological examiner licensed before December 31, 1997, shall be granted independent practice except in neuropsychological assessment, forensic psychological assessment, and projective personality assessment upon the board's receiving a letter requesting independent practice and a revised statement of intent.~~

~~(B) No additional hours of clinical supervision shall be required for a license granted under subdivision (d)(1)(A) of this section.~~

~~(2) A psychological examiner licensed after December 31, 1997, shall be privileged to practice independently except in neuropsychological assessment, forensic psychological assessment, and projective personality assessment, if the person:~~

~~(A) Has completed a master's degree program in psychology;~~

~~(B) Has completed three thousand (3,000) hours of approved clinical supervised training after making application for independent practice; and~~

~~(C) Has filed a revised statement of intent with the board and has provided documentation of having received appropriate training and experience in those areas requested for independent practice.~~

~~(3) A psychological examiner licensed after December 31, 2024, shall not be granted independent practice status if he or she submits an application to the board for independent practice.~~

(d) After December 31, 2026, a new psychological examiner license shall not be issued.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code Title 17, Chapter 97, Subchapter 3, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

17-97-313. Licensed psychological practitioner – Application – Qualifications – Compensation.

(a) A person wishing to practice as a licensed psychological practitioner shall apply to the Arkansas Psychology Board through the Chair of the Arkansas Psychology Board upon a form and in the manner as determined by the board.

(b)(1) A candidate for a license shall furnish the board with satisfactory evidence that he or she:

(A) Has completed:

(i) A sixty-hour master's degree in health services psychology that is approved by the board and includes the following coursework and training in:

(a) Discipline-specific knowledge such as affective psychology, biological psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social aspects of behavior psychology, psychometrics, and research methods;

(b) Profession-wide competencies such as integration of science and practice, ethical and legal standards, individual and cultural diversity, professional values and behavior, communication and interpersonal skills, assessment, intervention, supervision, and consultation and interprofessional skills;

(c) Eight hundred (800) hours of a practicum or internship with a total of four hundred (400) direct client services; and

(d) At least one (1) year in a residence program; and

(ii) Three thousand (3,000) hours of post-degree clinical supervision approved by the board that includes:

(a) Two thousand two hundred (2,200) hours of direct client service in the intended scope of practice;

(b) One (1) hour of supervision per ten (10) hours of direct client service for the first one thousand (1,000) hours;

(c) One (1) hour of supervision per twenty (20) hours of direct client service for the remaining hours; and

(d) One hundred (100) hours of didactic

learning in the intended scope of practice per year;

(B) Is competent as a licensed psychological practitioner as shown by passing examinations, written or oral, or both, as the board deems necessary;

(C) Is not considered by the board to be engaged in unethical practice;

(D) Has applied for a criminal background check and has not been found guilty of or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any of the offenses listed in § 17-3-102; and

(E) Has not failed an examination given by the board within the preceding six (6) months.

(2) At the board's discretion, the board may accept satisfactory substitute training and experience in lieu of that prescribed in subdivision (b)(1) of this section.

(3) A person who was previously licensed as a psychological examiner and granted the privilege to practice independently by the board on or before December 31, 2024, is not required to fulfill the requirements under subdivision (b)(1) of this section to be licensed under this section.

(c)(1) A licensed psychological practitioner may practice independently except in neuropsychological assessment, forensic psychological assessment, and projective personality assessment.

(2) A licensed psychological practitioner may practice independently in the following areas, consistent with his or her coursework, training, and supervised experience during internship and post-degree supervision:

(A) Providing evidence-based therapeutic interventions for individuals, families, or groups to improve mental health and wellness;

(B) Diagnosing, treating, and managing mental and emotional disorders or developmental and intellectual disabilities;

(C) Conducting evidence-based screening, interviewing, testing, and assessment consistent with training of psychoeducational, cognitive, personality characteristics, intelligence, achievement, vocational, aptitude, and outcome management;

(D) Providing psychoeducational evaluation, planning, therapy, and remediation services;

(E) Consulting and collaborating with other healthcare

professionals in which the focus is on patient or family diagnoses and treatment planning; and

(F) Supervising provisionally licensed master's level clinicians in the areas listed in subdivisions (c)(2)(A) - (E) of this section.

(d) The board may issue a provisional license to a person who has completed the requirements in subdivisions (b)(1)(A)(i) and (b)(1)(B)-(E) of this section to ensure that the person obtains the appropriate approved post-degree clinical supervised training as required under subdivision (b)(1)(A)(ii) of this section.

(e) For services provided, a licensed psychological practitioner shall receive compensation from:

- (1) Medicare;
- (2) The Arkansas Medicaid Program;
- (3) A private insurance policy or plan;
- (4) A health benefit plan; or
- (5) A healthcare provider or healthcare professional.

/s/L. Johnson