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CSWE 70th Annual Program Meeting | October 24–27, 2024 | Kansas City, MO

Introduction to Accreditation for New Baccalaureate and Master's Programs

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With credit to Constance Adams, MSW, LCSW, Accreditation Training Manager

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Purpose of Accreditation

Accreditation is an elective peer-review system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions as having a level of performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve.

The purposes of accreditation are:

Quality assurance

Academic improvement

Professional preparation

Public accountability

Benefits of Accreditation

Students

- Enrollment in a quality education program
- Essential professional competencies
- Qualify for employment and/or licensure

Social Work Programs

- National standards
- Continuous quality improvement
- Prepare students to practice safely, competently, and ethically with all clients, constituents, and the public

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Key Players

Volunteer BOA members

Volunteer Visitors

Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) staff

Baccalaureate and master's social work programs

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Phases of Starting a New Program:

New Applicant
- Exploring Accreditation of New Program.
- Includes:
  - Candidacy Eligibility Fee and Application.
  - Submitting Benchmark 1 (BM1) for staff approval.

Pre-Candidacy
- Pre-Candidacy Status attained.
- Staff Approval of BM1 has been granted.
- Program is placed on a BOA agenda.
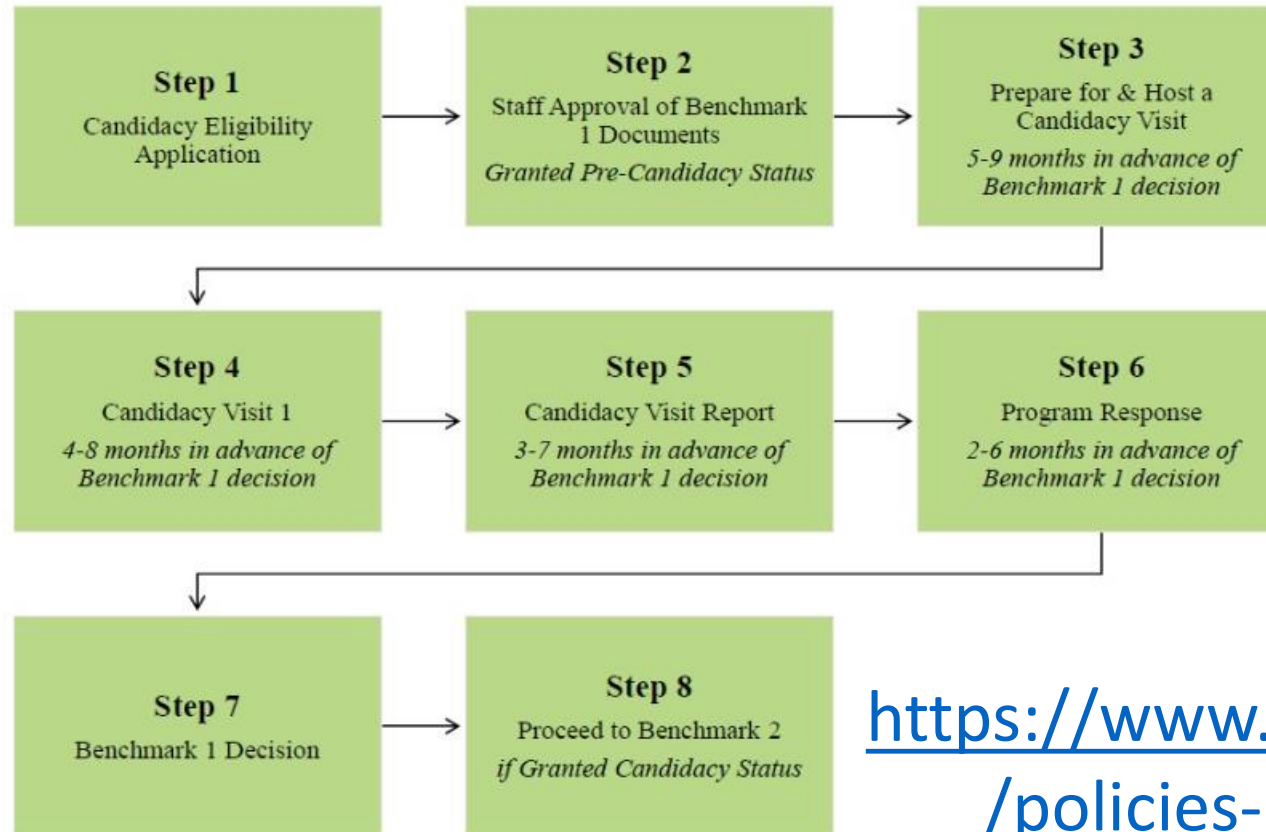- Program is assigned to CSWE Accreditation Specialist to work with.

Candidacy
- Candidacy Status granted by the Board of Accreditation (BOA).
- Candidacy typically takes 2-3 years.

Initial Accreditation
- Initial Accreditation granted by BOA.
- Accreditation is an ongoing process for alignment and compliance with EPAS.
- BOA reviews program for reaffirmation every 8 years.

BM1 Process

Candidacy | Benchmark 1 - Process Overview

Step 1 Candidacy Eligibility Application	**Step 2** Staff Approval of Benchmark 1 Documents *Granted Pre-Candidacy Status*	**Step 3** Prepare for & Host a Candidacy Visit *5-9 months in advance of Benchmark 1 decision*
Step 4 Candidacy Visit 1 *4-8 months in advance of Benchmark 1 decision*	**Step 5** Candidacy Visit Report *3-7 months in advance of Benchmark 1 decision*	**Step 6** Program Response *2-6 months in advance of Benchmark 1 decision*
Step 7 Benchmark 1 Decision	**Step 8** Proceed to Benchmark 2 *if Granted Candidacy Status*	

https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/candidacy/

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Staff Approval of BM1

- Includes submission of fully completed document reflecting compliance plans for approval and developmental standards.

- Staff approval is granted when:
  - Program provides evidence that a plan for approval standards is fully thought out and that attempts at developmental standards have been made
    - What do we mean by approval standards and developmental standards
  - Candidacy Eligibility Application must be approved, and Candidacy Eligibility Fee paid before staff can review a BM1 submission.

Program Options

- All program options that programs wish to be covered under initial accreditation must be declared within the document for staff approval of BM1.

- Standards require that program respond inclusive of all program options.

- If programs wish to later add a program option, they will need to go through the substantive change process.

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What does staff approval mean for my program?

- Program is issued Pre-candidacy Status and is placed on a BOA agenda for review for Candidacy Status:
  - Candidacy visit will be scheduled;
  - Candidacy visitor reviews document ahead of visit; and
  - BOA members also review document ahead of review date for candidacy status.
- Once Candidacy Status is granted, retroactive accreditation status applies.

Retroactive Accreditation Status

Per policy 5.2 Retroactive Accredited Status in the Accreditation Policy Handbook:

Only students admitted to the social work program **during or after** the academic year in which the program is granted candidacy will be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program, once the program achieves initial accreditation as granted by the Board of Accreditation (BOA). **Students admitted prior to the academic year in which the program was granted candidacy will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited social work education program**, regardless of the program's accredited status when they graduate.

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Example application of Retroactive Accreditation Status:

- If your goal is to admit students into your new social work program beginning in **Fall 2025**, due dates for the following timetables **must be met**.

  - October BOA Meeting Agenda (2025-2027),
  - February BOA Meeting Agenda (2026-2028), or
  - June BOA Meeting Agenda (2026-2028)

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Submission Deadlines

Submission of BM1 for Staff Approval*	BM1 Staff Approval Deadline	BOA Meeting Agenda for Candidacy Status Decision	Retroactive Accreditation Status
June 1, 2024	December 1, 2024	October 2025	2025-2026 Academic Year
December 1, 2024	June 1, 2025	February 2026	2025-2026 Academic Year
March 1, 2025	September 1, 2025	June 2026	2025-2026 Academic Year
June 1, 2025	December 1, 2025	October 2026	2026-2027 Academic Year
December 1, 2025	June 1, 2026	February 2027	2026-2027 Academic Year
March 1, 2026	September 1, 2026	June 2027	2026-2027 Academic Year
June 1, 2026	December 1, 2026	October 2027	2027-2028 Academic Year

* Additional actions and due dates are integrated throughout timetable. These are the highlighted items.

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Estimated Timeline (Applicant through Candidacy)*

*Additional actions and due dates are integrated throughout actual timetable. These are the highlighted items

Submission of Candidacy Eligibility Fee	Submission of Candidacy Eligibility Application	Staff Review of Submission of Candidacy Eligibility	Deadline to submit BM1 to staff for approval	BM1 Staff Approval Deadline	Submission of BM1 for BOA	Candidacy Visit Period	BOA Meeting Agenda for Candidacy Status Decision
Prior to application	30-60 days prior to 6/1/2024	30 days for each review	No later than 6/1/2024	12/1/2024	30 days prior to visit	3/1/2025 through 5/31/2025	October 2025
Prior to application	30-60 days prior to 12/1/2024	30 days for each review	No later than 12/1/2024	6/1/2025	30 days prior to visit	9/1/25 through 11/15/2025	February 2026
Prior to application	30-60 days prior to 3/1/2025	30 days for each review	No later than 3/1/2025	9/1/2025	30 days prior to visit	12/1/2025 through 2/28/2026	June 2026

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BM1 Approval Standards
Things To Look Out For

Minimum Faculty Requirements

Baccalaureate Programs

Minimum 2 Faculty Assigned

Master's Degree in Social Work

Master's Programs

Minimum 4 Faculty Assigned

Master's Degree in Social Work

Majority Have a Doctoral Degree, Preferably in Social Work

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Minimum Faculty (Cont'd...)

- To approve the draft Benchmark 1 document and enter Pre-candidacy: Programs must have two (2) full-time principally assigned baccalaureate program faculty (for baccalaureate programs) or master's program faculty (for master's programs) formally hired, with a start date no later than 30-days before the visit date (i.e., when the Benchmark document is sent to the visitor and program's accreditation specialist) even if students are not enrolled or the program is not fully operational.

- Program director or field director can count towards minimum faculty number so long as they are on a faculty line and have a principal assignment to the program they are counted for (51% or more assignment to that program level).

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Faculty to Student (FTE) Ratio

- **Accreditation Standard B4.2.3:** *Inclusive of all program options, the baccalaureate program has a full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio not greater than 1:25. For programs that do not meet the 1:25 faculty-to-student ratio, the program has evidence to demonstrate achievement of student competence [AS 5.0.1(b)] and program outcomes (AS 5.0.3).*

- **Accreditation Standard M4.2.3:** *Inclusive of all program options, the master's program has a full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio not greater than 1:12. For programs that do not meet the 1:12 faculty-to-student ratio, the program has evidence to demonstrate achievement of student competence [AS 5.0.1(b)] and program outcomes (AS 5.0.3).*

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Who is Counted in the Ratio?

- Faculty
  - Include all full-time faculty
  - **It is optional to include part-time faculty**

- Students
  - Include all full-time
  - Include all part-time

Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Ratio

- **Compliance Statement c:** For programs that do not meet the *1:25* faculty-to-student ratio, the program provides evidence demonstrating achievement of student competence [*AS 5.0.1(b)*] and program outcomes (*AS 5.0.3*).

- **Compliance Statement c:** For programs that do not meet the *1:12* faculty-to-student ratio, the program provides evidence demonstrating achievement of student competence [*AS 5.0.1(b)*] and program outcomes (*AS 5.0.3*).

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Calculating the FTE Ratio

- Provide the Formula
  - Programs have the autonomy to determine the formula
- Show the math!
  - Programs have the autonomy to determine the calculation
- Example formulas and calculations using the institution's faculty workload policy (use the definitions and tips column in the 2022 EPAS Interpretation Guide):
  - Consider including all faculty workload policy roles in the calculation (e.g., teaching, administration, research, service, advising).
  - If the full-time teaching workload is six (6) courses per academic year, then each course taught by a part-time faculty member constitutes 1/6 (0.17) FTE.
  - If a faculty member has a 75% (0.75 FTE) baccalaureate teaching appointment and 25% (0.25 FTE) baccalaureate administrative appointment, then they have 100% (1.0 FTE) assigned to the baccalaureate program

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Program Director

- AS B/M 4.3.4(a)
- Administers all program options.
- Must have a full-time appointment to social work.
- Principal assignment to program level they administer.
- Institutions with accredited baccalaureate and master's social work programs must have a separate director for each program.
- On letterhead signed by a supervisor.
- Must be hired with start date 30 days prior to candidacy visit, before candidacy eligibility application can be accepted.

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Program Director Qualifications

- **Accreditation Standard B4.3.4(b):** *The baccalaureate program director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. The program director has the ability to provide leadership through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and/or other academic and professional activities in social work.*

- **Accreditation Standard M4.3.4(b):** *The master's program director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. In addition, it is preferred that the master's program director have a doctoral degree, preferably in social work. The program director has the ability to provide leadership through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and/or other academic and professional activities in social work.*

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Program Director Assigned Time

- Accreditation Standard B/M4.3.4(c).

- Sufficient assigned time for administrative oversight of the social work program, inclusive of all program options.

- It is customary for the program director to have, at minimum, 25% assigned time to administer the baccalaureate social work program.

- It is customary for the program director to have, at minimum, 50% assigned time to administer the master's social work program.

- Must make explicit statement about sufficiency.

- Show the procedures for calculating the assigned time and the mathematical calculation itself (in other words: show your work).

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Field Director

- AS B/M 4.3.5(a)

- Administers all program options.

- Must have a full-time appointment to social work.

- Institutions with accredited baccalaureate and master's social work programs may have the same field education director appointed to both programs.

- Program Director and Field Director can be the same person with requisite assigned time.

- On letterhead signed by supervisor.

- Must be hired with start date 30 days prior to candidacy visit, before staff approval of BM1.

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Field Director Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard B4.3.5(b):*** *The baccalaureate field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two years of post-baccalaureate social work degree or post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work. The field education director has the ability to provide leadership to the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and administrative and/or other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.*

- ***Accreditation Standard M4.3.5(b):*** *The master's field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two years of post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work. The field education director has the ability to provide leadership to the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and/or administrative or other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.*

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Field Director Assigned Time

- Accreditation Standard B/M4.3.5(c).

- Sufficient assigned time for administrative oversight of the field education program, inclusive of all program options.

- It is customary for the field director to have, at minimum, 25% assigned time to administer the baccalaureate social work program.

- It is customary for the field director to have, at minimum, 50% assigned time to administer the master's social work program.

- Must make explicit statement about sufficiency.

- Show the procedures for calculating the assigned time and the mathematical calculation itself (in other words: show your work).

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Program Mission Standards

- **Accreditation Standard 1.0.1:** *The program has a program-level mission statement that is consistent with the profession's purpose and values. Institutions with accredited baccalaureate and master's programs have a separate mission statement for each program.*

- **Accreditation Standard 1.0.2:** *The program's mission statement is consistent with the program's context.*

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Program Mission Standards: Common Themes

- Mission statement must be program-level specific. Oftentimes we will see institutional/departmental mission statements as opposed to program-level specific mission statements.

- Programs need to be able to demonstrate in AS 1.0.2, **how** its mission statement is consistent with the program's context. They do this by identifying clear linkages between excerpts of the mission statement and elements of the program's context.

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Generalist Practice

- **Accreditation Standard 3.1.1:** *The program's generalist practice curriculum integrates the classroom and field and is informed by the professional practice community.*

- Describe the generalist practice curriculum design, including all classroom and field education courses.

- Explain the coherent integration between the class and field curricula.

- Explain how the professional practice community is actively engaged in the explicit curriculum.
  - The key with this part of the standard is ongoing engagement (not a one-time act).
  - Explain the professional practice community's impact on content, development, and delivery.
  - What have you done already as well as what you will do moving forward.

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Specialized Practice

- ***Accreditation Standard M3.2.1:*** *The program has at least one area of specialized practice. For each area of specialized practice, the program extends and enhances the nine social work competencies (and any additional competencies added by the program).*

- ***Accreditation Standard M3.2.2:*** *The program's area(s) of specialized practice builds on elements of generalist practice.*
  - Select the elements of the generalist practice definition that best influence each area of specialized practice (not required to discuss all elements)
  - Explain how each area of specialized practice builds upon each selected element.

- ***Accreditation Standard M3.2.3:*** *The program's specialized practice curriculum integrates classroom and field and is informed by the professional practice community.*
  - *Same as 3.1.1, but for specialized practice.*

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Implicit Curriculum, Student Development, & Admissions

- ***Accreditation Standard 4.1.1:*** *The program's admissions policies are equitable and inclusive, with particular attention to underrepresented as well as historically and currently oppressed groups.*
  - Underrepresented and historically and currently oppressed groups are unique to each program's context.
  - Describe how program admissions policies make the program both equitable and inclusive.
  - Describe how these admissions policies make the program equitable and inclusive for underrepresented and historically and currently oppressed groups.

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Implicit Curriculum, Student Development, & Admissions (Cont'd...)

- **Accreditation Standard B4.1.2:** *The program has criteria for admission, a process for application evaluation, and a process to notify students of admission decisions.*
  - Include all admissions types
  - Include the process for evaluating admission applications.
  - Process for notification (for all decision types) and how stakeholders are informed.

- **Accreditation Standard M4.1.2:** *The program has criteria for admission, a process for application evaluation, and a process to notify students of admission decisions. The criteria for admission to the master's program must include an earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting organization.*
  - Include all admissions types
  - Include the process for evaluating admission applications.
  - Process for notification (for all decision types) and how stakeholders are informed.
  - Explicitly state earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting organization

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Implicit Curriculum, Student Development, & Admissions (Cont'd...)

- **Accreditation Standard M4.1.3:** *The program offers advanced standing to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE. The program has a policy to ensure that students from CSWE-accredited baccalaureate social work programs do not repeat generalist content at the master's level that has been achieved at the baccalaureate level.*
  - All master's programs must offer advanced standing.
  - Programs are not permitted to offer advanced standing-only programs.
  - Include process/mechanism for ensuring baccalaureate social work graduates do not repeat generalist content achievements
  - Pre-candidate and candidate programs: Must have advanced standing policies at Benchmark 1 and can offer advanced standing admission anytime during the candidacy process; however, advanced standing must be offered at Benchmark 3

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Resources Standards

- ***Accreditation Standard 4.4.1:*** *The program uses its budget development and administration process to achieve its mission and continuously improve the program. The program has sufficient financial resources to achieve its mission.*
    - Process for developing budget and administering it.
    - How these processes achieve program's mission and allow for continuous improvement.
    - Do not include line items on the Budget Form that are not from the program's budget.
    - Discuss sufficiency of resources (must make explicit statement of sufficiency).
- ***Accreditation Standard 4.4.4:*** *The program has sufficient technological access, technology support, and if applicable, office and classroom space to achieve its mission.*
    - Must be program-level specific
    - Describe technological access, technological support, and classroom space (if applicable).
    - Describe sufficiency of resources (must make explicit statement of sufficiency).

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Resources Standards (Cont'd...)

- ***Accreditation Standard 4.4.5:*** *The program has sufficient resources and supports, including supportive technology, student services, and if applicable, physical space, that reduce barriers while optimizing accessibility and equity for all its students.*
  - Must be program-level specific
  - Two or more examples of each:
    - Supportive Technology;
    - Student Services; &
    - Physical Spaces (if applicable).
  - How students access each.
  - Explicit statement describing whether its resources and supports are sufficient in reducing barriers and optimizing accessibility and equity for all students.

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Training & Resources

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2022 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit

www.cswe.org/2022EPAS

The toolkit includes:

- 2022 EPAS for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs
- 2022 EPAS Interpretation Guide
- Required Forms & Samples
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Information
- Program Outcomes Information
- Accreditation Policy Handbook

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Accreditation Scope & Services

www.cswe.org/accreditation/scopeandservices

The CSWE website includes:

- Overview
- Training
- New Program Applicants
- Substantive Change Process
- International Social Work Degree Review

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Forms, Tools, and Templates

- 2022 EPAS Benchmark Grid

- 2022 EPAS Accreditation Team Approach Grid

- Faculty Hiring Grid

- Candidacy Eligibility Application

- Candidacy Fees and Related Expenses

- Required Benchmark 1 Template

- Budget Form

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New Program Applicants

www.cswe.org/accreditation/scopeandservices/new-program-applicants/

Upcoming drop-in sessions:
Tuesday 11/19/2024 12:00pm-1:15pm ET
Tuesday 12/10/2024 12:00pm-1:15pm ET

Email Michael Leff at mleff@cswe.org

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Question and Answer Panel Discussion
With Michael E. Leff, JD, MSW and Kat Gibson-Ledl, BSW, LMSW-Macro

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