

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Friday, April 06, 2018 4:03:01 PM

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From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Friday, April 06, 2018 4:02 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS STATE BOARD EXAMINERS PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

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Title: LPC-S

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State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or
Opposed:

I agree with the recommendation from TCA that the structure of BHEC as proposed during the last Sunset Review would include one professional and one public member appointed by each board, with the presiding officer appointed by the Governor.

Also, I agree with the Sunset Commission staff finding in Issue 1 to consolidate the four behavioral health boards into a single agency – the Behavioral Health Executive Council.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

This is a letter I sent to the LPC Board in September 2017:

September 15, 2017

To the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, I have had the privilege of being an LPC Supervisor in Texas for the past 7 years, and have supervised 19 interns in various stages of the post-graduate intern process. In 2014, together with a colleague, I started a clinical supervision consultation group called Supervision Roundtable that meets monthly in Central Texas to staff issues related to supervision. I regularly teach CEUs for professionals and agencies around various issues related to clinical supervision. My colleagues, interns, and friends will confirm - I am passionate about providing great supervision and support to provisionally licensed clinicians in the state of Texas!

I am writing to you today to express my deep frustration with the application process for LPCs and LPC-Interns. I consistently hear stories from prospective interns and current interns that describe their surprise and overwhelm at months-long wait times and errors that they never saw coming.

Individuals that are excited to start work after graduate school are faced with unknown timelines and unstructured communication about their applications. They are hesitant about contacting the board for fear of being flagged as impatient and uncooperative, or treated with disrespect and rudeness.

I understand that there are two sides to every story, and that the board staff are experiencing a great deal of stress and overwhelm as well. This is not meant to discount that, but rather to represent the constituent side of the situation.

With input from many wonderful colleagues, I submit below two major challenges we encounter on a regular basis, as well as some solutions for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have or provide any additional information you may need.

With gratitude,

Lora Ferguson, LPC-S #62345
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LPC and LPC-Intern Application Challenges and Proposed Solutions

CHALLENGE: Applicants regularly have “deficiencies” in their application, causing heavy delays in the application process.

- o Applicants are waiting months to become licensed, causing not only frustration and confusion, but often lost job opportunities and wages.
- o Applicants send “old” application forms or incomplete applications.
- o Board staff lose or misplace materials from applications.
- o Applicants from CACREP schools have a different process for submitting test scores than non-CACREP schools.

CHALLENGE: Prospective and current licensees have difficulty obtaining information about their license and/or their application.

- o Emails and voicemails often go unanswered.
- o Wait time on the phone regularly exceeds 45 minutes.
- o Individuals that answer the phone at the board office seem annoyed about applicants’ calls and questions and overwhelmed by their work load.
- o Individuals that answer the phone and email correspondence give inconsistent answers to questions from applicants, creating confusion and frustration, as well as more application deficiencies.
- o Prospective licensees are hesitant to contact the board office for fear that they will be “flagged” by office staff for “not being patient” or keeping them from their work.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

A.) Online Application Process – While it may be a lengthy and costly endeavor, creating an application process that is completely online would prevent many if not all of the errors and omissions in the applications. In North Carolina as well as some other states, applicants use an online portal for all their forms and communication. Link: <https://portal.ncblpc.org/>

B.) Effective Use of the Board Website – Organize the website to show where the applicant is in the process. For example, instead of showing an application is “open” it could be broken into sections (see Flow Chart for Applications below) and provide an estimated timeline. Additionally, allow applicants to see a checklist of what has been received and approved in their application packet along with what is still outstanding.

C.) Flow Chart for Applications – Post a flow chart for the application process to inform applicants what they can expect during the process, what steps are taken, and how their information is organized. Use sections in the flow chart to inform an applicant where he is in the process. For example:

- 1.) New Application Opened/Payment Processed
- 2.) Verifying Educational Requirements
- 3.) Verifying NCE Scores and Jurisprudence Exam
- 4.) Confirming Supervisor and Site(s)
- 5.) Out of State Applicants – Special Considerations

D.) Most Common Deficiencies List – Create and post a list of the most common deficiencies that are occurring with direct instructions as to how to avoid these errors.

E.) Complete Application – Post a Complete Application Tutorial on the website that includes common errors and who should fill out each form.

F.) Designated Contact Person – Assign applicants to a specific staff person at the board office (perhaps by last name or date submitted). Provide open communication opportunities via email and phone for addressing application issues with their direct contact.

G.) Private Forum for Licensees – Create a private forum where issues can be discussed around licensure, applications, and supervision, and licensees can have direct contact with the executive director and board members.

H.) Quarterly or Yearly Meetings for Licensees – Host a regular open forum meeting for licensees where questions can be directed to the board and Executive Director. Provide a written report from the ED for those who cannot attend the meeting.

I.) Promote Board Meeting Attendance – Provide the board meeting schedule at least 6 months in advance so that constituents have ample time to plan to attend.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree