

## MICHIGAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY (MFT) LICENSING GUIDE FOR SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

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### 1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

#### OVERVIEW

This guide looks at what you as a foreign-educated marriage and family therapy must do to become eligible for licensing in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background on the larger marriage and family therapy to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

#### REGULATION OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY PROFESSION

The practice of marriage and family therapy in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) on behalf of the Michigan Board of Marriage and Family Therapy. You must be licensed to practice as a marriage and family therapist (MFT) in Michigan.

The guide assumes that you hold the equivalent of a U.S. master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy and that your Michigan license will be your first U.S. marriage and family therapy license. As a foreign-educated MFT, you are required to first have your marriage and family therapy education evaluated by a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) agency. This list can be located at <http://www.naces.org/members.html>. The credentialing agency will also verify knowledge of the English language with a Toefl or Toefl-ibt.

You will become a Marriage and Family Therapist through Licensure by Examination once all documentation is received at the Michigan Board. The Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) exam is administered through PSI via computer.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

### OVERVIEW

Internationally educated Marriage and Family Therapists need to meet several requirements to receive Licensure by Examination as an MFT in Michigan.

#### I. EVALUATE YOUR FOREIGN DEGREE

LARA requires that you have your foreign marriage and family therapy degree evaluated using a NACES association.

- Select an agency off the NACES list
- Apply and pay online for the educational credentials review service
- Make sure that you ask for your report to be prepared for the Michigan Board of Marriage and Family Therapy as this will make your record available to the State electronically
- If your marriage and family therapy education was not taught in English, your report will include a determination of English language proficiency as tested on the TOEFL examination.

If your degree is not deemed equivalent to a U.S. degree, you will be provided information about the courses or subject areas in which you are deficient. If the Educational Credentials Review results in your education being found “not equivalent”, you may apply to for a re-evaluation of your educational credentials after submitting additional information about your education. You must work directly with your selected credentialing agency in correcting any deficiencies in your report; the Michigan Board of Marriage and Family Therapy has no role in the re-evaluation process.

## II. SUBMIT YOUR LICENSURE APPLICATION, REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, AND PAY APPLICATION FEE

Your application sent to the Michigan Board of Marriage and Family Therapy should include:

- Licensure application from LARA that can be downloaded from [www.michigan.gov/healthlicense](http://www.michigan.gov/healthlicense)
- Fee: paid by a check or money order drawn on a U.S. financial institution and made payable to the State of Michigan
- A course-by-course credential evaluation completed by an agency that is a member of NACES showing your educational program was substantially equivalent to a U.S. degree in Marriage and Family Therapy
- An applicant whose MFT education program was taught in a language other than English shall satisfactorily complete the TOEFL or the TOEFLib
- Submit course descriptions or syllabi for the coursework you list on your application
- Submit section 1 of the Supervisor's Evaluation of applicant's 300 Hours of Direct Client Contact Form, forward it to your supervisor to complete section 2 and have your supervisor submit it directly to the Michigan Board
- Complete section 1 of the Supervisor's Evaluation of the applications 1,000 Hours of Direct Client Contact form, forward it to your supervisor to complete section 2 and have your supervisor submit it directly to the Michigan Board
- Fingerprint/Criminal Background Check report
- Once all documentation is received, you will be made eligible to sit for the AMFTRB examination

The licensure application and fee are valid for 2 years. If you have not met all licensing requirements within these 2 years you will need to submit a new application and pay the processing fee again.

## III. GET FINGERPRINTED VIA A MICHIGAN-APPROVED VENDOR FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Directions for completing the fingerprint requirement are mailed to you from the Department upon receipt of your application.

### 3. TESTS

To become a licensed MFT in Michigan, you must take and pass the AMFTRB exam.

The Marriage and Family Therapy AMFTRB exam consists of 200 multiple choice questions. You have a total of 4 hours to complete this exam.

#### CONTENT AREAS OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY EXAM

The content of the AMFTRB exam measures knowledge important for independent practice as a massage therapist in all primary employment settings. The 200 multiple choice test questions assess the practice of systemic therapy; assessing hypothesizing and diagnosing; designing and conducting treatment; evaluating ongoing process and terminating treatment; managing crisis situations and maintaining ethical, legal and professional standards. The percentages show the approximate percent of questions each test taker will receive in the category:

1. The Practice of Systemic Therapy (23%)
2. Assessing, Hypothesizing, and Diagnosing (16%)
3. Designing and Conducting Treatment (23%)
4. Evaluating Ongoing Process and Terminating Treatment (13%)
5. Managing Crisis Situations (10%)
6. Maintaining Ethical, Legal, and Professional Standards (15%)

#### SCHEDULING AND TESTING SITE PROCEDURES OF THE AMFTRB MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY EXAM

AMFTRB exams are administered from the Professional Testing Corporation at PSI testing locations. You must first contact the Michigan Board to be made eligible for your exam. Once you have been approved to sit for your exam, you will be given an approval code for <http://secure.ptcny.com/apply> where you will apply and submit your exam and testing fees. Once your application has been approved through PTC you will receive an authorization to test which will include information on how to schedule your exam time and location.

On the day of the test you must bring your ATT and acceptable form of identification. Acceptable ID is a currently valid, government-issued photo ID (passport, driver's license, etc.). You should arrive at least a half hour early; you will not be allowed to take the test if you arrive more than fifteen minutes late for your appointment. You will have up to 2 hours to complete the test.

## FAILING THE AMFTRB EXAM

The National Marital and Family Therapy Examination may be taken as often as needed upon filing of a new application and appropriate fee. You must contact the state board prior to reapplying for your exam to ensure you are still eligible to sit for another exam.

## PRACTICING FOR THE AMFTRB

There are many different resources that can help you prepare for the content and the computer-based testing technology. There are a variety of test preparation resources available for low cost. AMFTRB offers a handbook at no charge here <https://www.amftrb.org/PDF/handbook/MFT%20Candidate%20Handbook%202014.pdf> .

## 4. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

### LOWER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider if taking a lower-level job in healthcare in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of licensing as a marriage and family therapist.

Preparing for the AMFTRB exam can take time. Working in healthcare in a different way and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages, such as

- employers paying for tuition and fees associated with the AMFTRB exam and licensing
- more energy to focus on studying

- a chance to adapt to the U.S. healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment

You should be honest with your employer about your long-term plans. You may find some employers have benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that will support your goals.

## HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility, instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

## 5. BEYOND LICENSING

### MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Marriage and Family Therapists must renew their license every 2 years. Licenses expire on January 30th every two years. LARA sends a notice reminding you to renew your license, so be certain to keep your contact information up-to-date with their office. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department. You must renew online. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to January 30. Be careful: if you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

There are currently no continuing education requirements that must be met in order to renew a license. However, Rule 338.7202 requires licensees to complete training in identifying victims of human trafficking beginning with the 2016 renewal cycle. This training requirement will need to be completed prior to the license renewal in 2019.

## LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)

The state of Michigan does not have any shared agreement to honor the marriage and family licenses of other states. It grants licensing to marriage and family therapy by either examination (the process described in this topic) or endorsement (where a marriage and family therapist licensed in another state must meet all Michigan requirements for licensing).

## 6. IMPORTANT LINKS

### LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) issues licenses for Marriage and Family Therapists. Application packets (both by Examination and by Endorsement) can be downloaded on the homepage.
- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is [www.michigan.gov/healthlicense](http://www.michigan.gov/healthlicense). The page that specifically concerns marriage and family therapy: [http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600\\_72603\\_27529\\_27538---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_27538---,00.html) and it includes information regarding the boards, applications and frequently asked questions.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing, PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909 Telephone Number 517-335-0918; Fax: 517-373-1044 Email: [bplhelp@michigan.gov](mailto:bplhelp@michigan.gov)
- The law that regulates licensing for all health professions including can be read at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>;
- The administrative rules governing marriage and family therapy practice in Michigan can be located at: [http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/AdminCode.aspx?AdminCode=Department&Dpt=LR&Level\\_1=Bureau+of+Professional+Licensing](http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/AdminCode.aspx?AdminCode=Department&Dpt=LR&Level_1=Bureau+of+Professional+Licensing)

## CREDENTIAL REVIEW AGENCIES

- National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)  
[www.naces.org/](http://www.naces.org/)

## TESTING

- Educational Testing Services <https://www.amftrb.org/exam.cfm>