

The Disciplinary Process – Review of Licensed Psychology, Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Regulatory Board Websites

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In 2025, Ms. Hahn researched websites for regulatory boards in other states that license some of the professions regulated by the KS BSRB, to collect information on disciplinary processes available on those websites. Ms. Hahn's findings are summarized below:

Question #1. Do most state regulatory board websites have a standard complaint form for filing complaints against licensees?

A. Yes, almost all websites have a standard complaint form.

Questions #2. Do the websites include a release of information to be signed by the complainant with the complaint form?

A. A little more than half of the states included a release with the complaint form. For states that included a release, the language in that release varies.

Question #3. Do states accept anonymous complaints?

A: Less than half the states accepted anonymous complaints. For those states that did, it was acknowledged that anonymous complaints could be difficult to investigate.

Question #4. How are complaints submitted?

A: Three quarters of states used online submission. Very few states used online-only submissions. Other states permitted complaints to be filed over e-mail. Some states require submission of paper forms.

Question #5. Do states have a posted investigation policy/regulation guiding their process?

A. At least half of the state had a posted process. The policies/processes range from very detailed flow charts to a simple written summary.

Question #6. Do the websites state how long, on average, the complaint process takes?

A. Very few states included language on their websites concerning the expected timeframe for the complaint process to be completed.

Question #7. On the websites for the different states, are full disciplinary orders posted or summaries?

A. It was approximately evenly split regarding full orders or summaries being posted.

Question #8. How is disciplinary information organized on these websites?

- A. Information tends to be sorted either by date or by the name of the licensee in alphabetical order. On certain websites, some information could be filtered, such as by date of the order, licensee name, profession, etc.

Question #9. How far back did states post disciplinary information?

- A. It varied; some states went back to the 1990s, though other states only posted the past several months or years. For states not posting a longer history, language was included that information on earlier actions could be requested.

Take Aways

I often found myself comparing KS BSRB's website and information to the state website I was reviewing. What are we doing well, what could we do more effectively?

Submission of complaints – Many states offer the option of submitting complaints either online via a form on the website or by paper form. A number of state boards also require, as part of the submission process, that the complainant verify the person against whom they are filing the complaint is licensed by the agency.

The Investigation Process – Detailed information, either as part of the complaint form or on the website explaining the process is very helpful. Information included: jurisdiction of the agency/board, what they could and could not help with, flow charts of the process, whether they could provide an estimate for how long the process generally takes, possible outcomes, confidentiality, and whether a complaint and response are subject to an open records request, etc. One state, as part of the investigation process, allowed the complainant to review and respond to the licensee's response to the complaint.

Disciplinary actions: There was a combination of summary actions and complete orders. Many states don't list the disciplinary actions on their website, rather they are linked to a specific person. If someone performed a license verification for "Jan Smith," then the verification would note disciplinary action with a link to either the full order or a summary. Other states included information regarding whether the case was closed or if the action was ongoing.

Unprofessional conduct/ethics regulations: While available on most states' websites, they are often not easy to locate. They tend to be embedded within statutes and regulations.