



Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling

2777 Zelda Road • Montgomery, Alabama 36106

ABEC TRANSITION UPDATES

As we have continued to work through our updating of the ABEC Board operations we have encountered many unexpected obstacles. For years the ABEC maintained its licensee information through a paper file system that, while adequate for the era in which it was created, became increasingly unable to keep up with the needs of a progressively complex licensing system. As our profession outgrew the ‘analog’ pen and paper application and renewal processes that were better suited to a bygone era, subsequent ABEC administrations inherited a series of processes that were already outdated, and quickly becoming antiquated. Unsurprisingly, necessity eventually demanded a complete turnover of ABEC leadership and staff to begin to address the needed changes.

We now find ourselves in the unenviable position of it being absolutely critical that the ABEC update a set of complex licensure and regulatory systems in the face of a changing -- and sometimes hostile -- professional landscape, exacerbated by a global pandemic which has, sometimes catastrophically, impacted available resources, personnel, state systems and offices, and the simple ability to get things done in a timely fashion.

Under these circumstances the ABEC decided to make the changes to its operations that have been desperately needed for many years. Knowing the discord this would create, this was no easy decision, but the Board desired to improve its operations to better promote the integrity of counselor licensure, abide by state law, and promote and enforce qualification standards for all levels of counseling licensure as specified in its mission statement.

Presently, we find ourselves dealing with a backlog of applications and requested services that go back many months and, in some few cases, years. We have made very positive strides and are beginning to bring our vision of a new, modern ABEC to fruition, although from the outside it could certainly appear that we are doing next-to-nothing. The backlog in application processing that many have lately experienced was, in reality, years in the making. It will not be alleviated overnight, but it is being addressed definitively as we move to a digital 24/7 online application/renewal process in the coming months.

In the near future, you can expect many changes, large and small. Many will be invisible to you as we build a new foundation of operations, and some will be based in our need to promote the needs of the citizens of Alabama. For example, to reduce the hardships brought on by the COVID-19, we have temporarily waived or adjusted several application, continuing education, and supervision processes. I urge you to read the linked document



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<https://abec.alabama.gov/COVID19Updates.aspx>), and particularly the section *ALC Renewal Processes*, which states: *“Until the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer declared a Federal or State emergency, ALC renewals will not be required to be voted on and approved by the ABEC Board (255-X-4-.05). However, all ALC renewal applications will continue to be administratively reviewed by the ABEC office per standard operating procedure and, if the application is found to be complete (with filled-out and signed renewal form, acceptable continuing education documentation, and correct fee payment), the renewed ALC licensure certificate will be summarily approved and sent to the applicant.”*

So, as we move forward with the daunting task of bringing our old processes into the modern age, the ABEC appreciates your patience and support. We thank you in advance for your understanding as we move through this process together.

Stay safe,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna Barksdale".

Anna Barksdale – ABEC Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "K. Cates", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Keith Cates – ABEC Executive Director