

Social Worker

Professional Activities

Social Workers provide individuals, families, and groups with the psychosocial support needed to cope with chronic, acute, or terminal illnesses. Services include advising family care givers, providing patient education and counseling, and making referrals for other services. May also provide care and case management or interventions designed to promote health, prevent disease, and address barriers to access to healthcare.

Social Workers:

- Advocate for clients or patients to resolve crises.
- Collaborate with other professionals to evaluate patients' medical or physical condition and to assess client needs.
- Refer patient, client, or family to community resources to assist in recovery from mental or physical illness and to provide access to services such as financial assistance, legal aid, housing, job placement or education.
- Counsel clients and patients in individual and group sessions to help them overcome dependencies, recover from illness, and adjust to life.
- Utilize consultation data and social work experience to plan and coordinate client or patient care and rehabilitation, following through to ensure service efficacy.
- Plan discharge from care facility to home or other care facility.
- Organize support groups or counsel family members to assist them in understanding, dealing with, and supporting the client or patient.
- Modify treatment plans to comply with changes in clients' status.
- Monitor, evaluate, and record client progress according to measurable goals described in treatment and care plan.
- Identify environmental impediments to client or patient progress through interviews and review of patient records.

Educational Requirements

A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required for almost all jobs as a social worker. Students in these programs are educated both in the classroom and in clinical settings. With a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree, you'll be qualified for entry-level positions like a mental health assistant, residential counselor or a program coordinator. You'll need a master's degree or MSW to become a licensed clinical social worker. This means you can provide one-on-one therapy. With your doctorate, you will gain advanced training in research, supervision and policy analysis. DSWs typically do research or teach at the university level.

Academic Programs

[Aurora University](#)

[Bradley University](#)

[Chicago State University](#)

[Concordia University Chicago](#)

[DePaul University](#)

[Dominican University](#)

[Governors State University](#)

[Illinois State University](#)

[Lewis University](#)

[Loyola University](#)

[Olivet Nazarene University](#)

[Southern Illinois University](#)

[St. Augustine College](#)

[Trinity Christian College](#)

[University of Chicago](#)

[University of Illinois at Chicago](#)

Employment/Salary Outlook

Employment of child, family, and school social workers is projected to grow 6 percent from 2014 to 2024 faster than the average for all occupations. Child and family social workers will be needed to work with families to strengthen parenting skills, prevent child abuse, and identify alternative homes for children who are unable to live with their biological families. In schools, more social workers will be needed due to rising student enrollments.

Employment of healthcare social workers is projected to grow 19 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. As baby boomers age, they and their families will require help from social workers to find care, increasing the need for healthcare social workers. Employment of mental health and substance abuse social workers is projected to grow 19 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. Employment will grow as more people seek treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders. In addition, drug offenders are increasingly being sent to treatment programs rather than to jail. As a result, use of substance abuse treatment programs is expected to grow, increasing demand for these specialists.

State and National Wages

Location	Pay Period	2021		
		Low	Median	High
United States	Hourly	\$17.68	\$29.42	\$44.97
	Annual	\$36,780	\$61,190	\$93,540
Illinois	Hourly	\$17.74	\$34.19	\$46.02
	Annual	\$36,910	\$71,120	95,720

State and National Trends

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2021	2031		
Social Workers, All Other	59,000	60,700	3%	5,700
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2020	2030		
Social Workers, All Other	-	-	-	-

Professional Organizations

National Association of Social Workers (socialworkers.org)

References

Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
(<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>)

O*NET OnLine (<http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/21-1029.00>)

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