

# SOCIAL WORK

What can I do with this major?

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES

### **PUBLIC WELFARE**

Administration and Planning  
Case Management  
Program Evaluation  
Policy Development  
Research  
Supervision

Public welfare agencies  
Private social service agencies  
Local, state, and federal government including:  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Education  
Housing Services  
Adult Protective Services  
Veterans Administration  
Indian Health Services  
Administrative agencies  
Job Corps  
Head Start  
State legislatures

**Public welfare is designed to provide services and support for poor, disabled, ill, elderly, or juvenile clients.**

Volunteer at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, battered women homes, literacy programs, or other social service agencies to get experience.  
Supplement curriculum with course work in areas such as public relations, advertising, accounting, or management. Consider earning a business minor.  
Gain management experience through internships, part-time employment, or leadership in relevant student organizations.  
Complete an internship with a government agency. Learn about the government application process and apply early as the process can take at least four to six months.  
Four out of ten social workers work for the government.

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### **SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

Counseling  
Case Management  
Pupil Personnel Services  
Student Advocacy  
Instruction  
Assessment  
Referral

Elementary and secondary schools  
School districts  
Head Start centers  
Early intervention programs

**School systems may employ social workers to help students cope with and resolve emotional, developmental, or educational difficulties.**

Gain experience with children at daycare centers, camps, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the like.  
Volunteer with organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters.  
Obtain state certification for work in a school. Research requirements in your state.  
Plan to collaborate with multidisciplinary teams including teachers, school counselor(s), school administrators, therapists, and others.

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES
<p><b><u>CRIMINAL JUSTICE/CORRECTIONS</u></b></p> <p>Counseling/Therapy Rehabilitation Probation Parole Youth Services Victim Assistance Drug Prevention</p>	<p>Prisons and correctional facilities Courts Police departments Probation and parole offices Victim services organizations Private treatment facilities Youth services organizations</p>	<p><b>Social workers in corrections focus on rehabilitation of clients.</b></p> <p>Obtain experience by volunteering at a corrections facility or victims' program such as a rape crisis center.</p> <p>Gain experience as a juvenile probation officer; many states allow reputable citizens to serve as volunteer officers.</p> <p>Become familiar with community services that include housing, remediation, job training, addiction treatment, child care, and transportation resources.</p>
<p><b><u>CLINICAL</u></b></p> <p>Counseling/Therapy:     Individual, Group, Couples, Family Assessment Case Management Crisis Intervention Program Planning</p>	<p>Community mental health centers Psychiatric hospitals Behavioral health systems Drug/alcohol rehabilitation centers Residential and day treatment hospitals Employee assistance programs (EAP) Schools Family service agencies Private or group practice</p>	<p><b>Clinical social workers are found in a variety of settings that provide therapeutic counseling to clients.</b></p> <p>Master of Social Work (MSW) is required.</p> <p>Obtain licensure as an LCSW since many employers require licensure to practice.</p> <p>Develop strong communication, listening, and organizational skills, along with a sense of empathy.</p> <p>Volunteer with a local social service or non-profit organization to test interest in working with different populations or presenting problems.</p> <p>Cultivate multicultural competence.</p>
<p><b><u>ADMINISTRATION</u></b></p> <p>Management Policy Development Planning Supervision Fundraising Budgeting Grant Writing Advocacy Evaluation</p>	<p>Family service agencies Child welfare departments Social service agencies State mental health departments Employee assistance programs (EAP) Probation and parole departments Public welfare agencies Public interest groups Local, state, and federal government Residential and outpatient hospitals/treatment centers</p>	<p><b>Administrators are involved with planning, budgeting, public relations, marketing, supervising, operations management, fund raising, and other crucial responsibilities that keep an organization functioning.</b></p> <p>Obtain an MSW and gain management experience.</p> <p>Consider a minor in business during undergraduate education.</p> <p>Participate in student organizations and pursue leadership roles to cultivate an understanding of motivational strategies and creative thinking skills.</p>

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES
<p><b><u>OCCUPATIONAL</u></b> Counseling Education Wellness Promotion Organizational Development Assessment Human Resources Intervention</p>	<p>Larger corporations Employee assistance programs (EAP) Labor unions Local, state, and federal government:     Department of Labor Community agencies</p>	<p><b>These social workers help employees and employers to be productive and satisfied.</b> Gain experience in a university or community career center while in school. Earn a relevant certification such as Certified Employee Assistance Professional or Global Career Development Facilitator. Supplement curriculum with course work in areas such as business that focus on efficient, creative, productive business models and management skills.</p>
<p><b><u>HEALTHCARE</u></b> Case Management Counseling Prevention and Education Program Development Administration Research Child Life Specialists Hospice Care Rehabilitation Wellness Promotion</p>	<p>Hospitals Community health centers Outpatient clinics Public health programs Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) Nursing homes Group homes Hospice Veterans Administration hospitals Home healthcare agencies</p>	<p><b>Social workers in healthcare facilitate medical and emotional treatment of patients. They may focus on helping clients and their families cope with acute or terminal illnesses by providing psychosocial support.</b> Choose volunteer settings such as hospitals, the American Red Cross, or AIDS agencies to get experience. Be prepared to work with multidisciplinary teams including doctors, nurses, health, and other mental health providers. Attend local support groups to begin to understand the impact of illness on the person, family, and other support systems.</p>
<p><b><u>COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION</u></b> Program and Community Development Advocacy Politics Education Planning</p>	<p>Advocacy organizations Development corporations Community centers Local, state, and federal government Political associations</p>	<p><b>Social workers in this area work with existing organizations to improve conditions for specific groups, enhance quality of living, and involve community members in the political process.</b> Get involved with grassroots causes and community agencies. Participate in local government and gain knowledge about city planning. Volunteer with local organizations that work with specific groups such as homeless people, immigrants, or refugees to learn more about advocacy work.</p>

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES
<p><b><u>GERONTOLOGY</u></b> Advocacy/Intervention Counseling Case Management Programming Public Policy Administration</p>	<p>Hospitals Nursing homes Senior centers Assisted/independent living centers Hospice Home healthcare agencies Mental health centers Employee assistance programs (EAP) Larger corporations, e.g. banks, investment firms, insurance companies</p>	<p><b>Gerontology involves working with older adults, healthy or ill, and their families.</b> Get involved with programs or organizations designed for senior citizens. Gain Social Work credentials oriented toward gerontology. Supplement curriculum with coursework in lifespan development and aging. Become familiar with community resources ranging from medical to transportation.</p>
<p><b><u>CHILD WELFARE</u></b> Case Management Advocacy Intervention Supervision</p>	<p>Local, state, and federal government including: Department of Children's Services Public and private child welfare agencies Adoption agencies Foster care organizations Child daycare centers</p>	<p><b>Child welfare social workers strive to ensure the safety and well-being of children through treatment of the whole family.</b> Volunteer at daycares, child shelters, camps, YMCA, Scouts, or other agencies that aid youth. Gain licensure as a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) after graduating from a master's program in Social Work. Acquire knowledge about local/national government procedures in reunification procedures. Plan to collaborate with multidisciplinary teams including lawyers, parents, foster care representatives, and other various government employees. Become familiar with community resources such as child care, job training, and parenting classes.</p>
<p><b><u>DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES</u></b> Case Management Program Planning and Evaluation Research Policy Development Advocacy</p>	<p>Community residential homes State and local agencies Medical facilities Schools Colleges and universities</p>	<p><b>Social workers in this area help people with disabilities to adjust and to lead productive lives.</b> Volunteer at camps for people with disabilities, daycares, schools, or hospitals to gain experience. Become familiar with human development and issues specific to disabilities and accommodations. Obtain specialized training in areas such as sign language or assistive technology for additional opportunities. Seek knowledge of assessment procedures and therapeutic recreational activities.</p>

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES
<p><b><u>RESEARCH AND EDUCATION</u></b> Research Teaching Grant Writing Supervision Program and Community Development Politics Advocacy</p>	<p>Colleges and universities Research institutes Research hospitals Local, state, and federal government Advocacy organizations</p>	<p><b>Research provides data and statistics important in program implementation and policy development.</b> Doctor of Social Work (DSW) or Ph.D. usually required. Some teaching and administration positions may be available to MSW's. Gain research experience as an undergraduate by assisting professors with their work. Complete an internship or graduate assistantship in a college setting to be competitive for jobs. Develop strong communication and writing skills. Acquire a solid background in statistics and research for higher education program development and evaluation.</p>

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**INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK**

<p>Humanitarian Services Advocacy Education Wellness Promotion Development: Economic and Community Disaster/Disease Relief Volunteer Coordination Program Administration Clinical Practice Policy Development Research</p>	<p>International Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) such as United Nations Economic and Social Council and the World Health Organization International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Federal government agencies with an international focus, e.g. Peace Corps and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Country-based service agencies International aid and relief organizations Foundation programs Nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations, e.g. Vital Voices or Habitat for Humanity Private voluntary organizations Humanitarian organizations, e.g. International Red Cross and CARE Religious organizations, e.g. World Vision Multi-national corporations</p>	<p><b>Social workers in the international arena identify social problems, make recommendations for social programs and implement change. They work on solutions to problems including educational, environmental, health, human rights injustices, business and agricultural.</b> Learn one or more foreign languages. Plan to study, volunteer, or intern abroad more than one time if possible. Seek cultural experiences on campus and get involved with the international student population. Join relevant student organizations such as Amnesty International and gain leadership roles. Participate in an international service learning experience or go on a mission trip. Learn about federal job hiring procedures, and apply for a government internship to increase chances of finding a full-time position. Research the international organization's/agency's structure and function.</p>
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**AREAS**

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**INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK CONT.**

Develop good working knowledge of international humanitarian law.  
Demonstrate your depth of dedication, willingness to adapt, and coping mechanisms to combat stress and difficult situations.  
Develop skills in the areas of organizing groups, efficiency, and the ability to calm people.  
Consider earning a graduate degree in Social Work or related area to open more advanced job opportunities.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) prepares individuals for entry-level direct practice.
  - Master of Social Work (MSW) is necessary to provide therapy and for advancement to supervisory or administrative positions.
  - Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) or Ph.D. usually required for positions in teaching, research, and administration. Advanced degrees are desirable for some clinical positions and private practice.
  - Complete a degree from a college or university program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Programs include practical field experience.
  - Most states require licensure, certification, or registration. Contact the state board directly or the American Association of State Social Work Boards (ASWB) for information.
  - The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) offers many specialized credentials that Social Workers can earn. Research these options after choosing a speciality area.
  - The field practicum is used to determine suitability for this profession and to provide exposure to various practice settings and clients.
  - Candidates should possess empathy for others, an appreciation for diversity, and an interest in social change.
  - Social workers serve a range of client systems (individuals, families, groups, communities) as they attempt to enhance social functioning.
  - Social work is unique given its dual focus on the person and the environment.
  - Join a social work organization while in school and seek leadership positions.
  - Look for ways to impact your community and get involved with local organizations and issues.
  - Update your resume as you acquire new accomplishments, skills, knowledge, and interests.
  - Learn a second language to better communicate with immigrant or migrant populations (particularly helpful in certain areas of the United States).
- Note: Much of this information was adapted from Choices: Careers in Social Work by the National Association of Social Workers.