



Human development  
PROGRAM

# CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

## JOB DESCRIPTION

Clinical social workers assess and treat individuals with mental illness or substance abuse problems, including abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Such services include individual and group therapy, outreach, crisis intervention, social rehabilitation, and training in skills of everyday living. They also may help plan for supportive services to ease patients' return to the community. Mental health and substance abuse social workers are likely to work in hospitals, substance abuse treatment centers, individual and family services agencies, or local governments.

## EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

Social workers should be emotionally mature, objective, and sensitive to people and their problems. They must be able to handle responsibility, work independently, and maintain good working relationships with clients and coworkers. Volunteer or paid jobs as a social work aide offer ways of testing one's interest in this field..

- Compassion/sensitivity
- Patience
- Excellent communication skills
- Maturity
- Leadership skills
- Confidence

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

A master's degree in social work (MSW) is required for *clinical* work. A bachelor's degree in social work (BSW) degree is the most common minimum requirement to qualify for a job as a social worker; however, majors in psychology, sociology, and related fields may qualify for some entry-level jobs, especially in small community agencies. Although a bachelor's degree is sufficient for entry into the field, an advanced degree has become the standard for many positions. A master's degree in social work (MSW) is typically required for positions in health settings, as well as supervisory positions. All States and the District of Columbia have licensing, certification, or registration requirements regarding social work practice and the use of professional titles. Although standards for licensing vary by State, a growing number of States are placing greater emphasis on communications skills, professional ethics, and sensitivity to cultural diversity issues. Most States require two years (3,000 hours) of supervised clinical experience for licensure of clinical social workers (LCSW).

## SALARIES

Salaries vary depending on work setting, years of experience, specialty and region or state.

Entry level: \$26,730	City of San Diego: \$50,000	Outpatient care facilities: \$33,220
Average: \$ 33,920	Psychiatric and substance abuse hospitals: \$36,170	Individual and family services: \$32,810
Experienced: \$54,180		

## EMPLOYMENT & ADVANCEMENT PROSPECTS

Employment of social workers is expected to increase 18-26% for all occupations through 2014. The rapidly growing elderly population and the aging baby boom generation will create greater demand for health and social services, resulting in particularly rapid job growth among gerontology social workers. Many job openings also will stem from the need to replace social workers who leave the occupation.

## RELATED OCCUPATIONS

- Counselors
- Psychologists
- Special education
- Occupational Therapy

## REFERENCES

National Association of Social Workers, 750 First St. N.E., Suite 700, Washington, DC 20002-4241. Internet: <http://www.socialworkers.org>

Council on Social Work Education, 1725 Duke St., Suite 500, Alexandria, VA 22314-3457. Internet:  
<http://www.cswe.org>