

Social Workers

SOC: 21-1020 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$61,330 Median Salary	810,900 Employment	+6.0% Growth Rate
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■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: See Requirements (BLS)

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 6.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.
This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

7.4/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	4.0/10	Investigative	5.8/10
Artistic	7.0/10	Social	9.2/10
Enterprising	5.0/10	Conventional	5.8/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Compassion, Interpersonal skills, Organizational skills, Problem-solving skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Social Workers are human services professionals who help individuals, families, and communities **cope with challenges, access resources, and improve overall well-being**. They work with people facing issues such as mental health concerns, substance use, family conflict, poverty, illness, or crisis, advocating for social justice while providing direct support and guidance. Their work blends compassion, assessment, and problem-solving to strengthen lives and communities.

This career is well suited for individuals who are empathetic, resilient, and motivated to make a meaningful impact through service and advocacy.

What Do Social Workers Do?

Social workers assess needs, develop plans, and connect clients to services that promote stability and growth. Responsibilities vary by setting and specialization but consistently center on support, advocacy, and ethical practice.

Common responsibilities include:

- Assessing clients' needs, strengths, and challenges
- Developing care or intervention plans
- Providing counseling, case management, or crisis intervention
- Connecting clients to community resources and services
- Advocating for clients' rights and access to support
- Monitoring progress and adjusting plans as needed
- Maintaining detailed records and documentation

Types of Social Workers

Social work includes several specializations across settings:

- Clinical Social Workers: Provide mental health counseling and therapy.
- Child and Family Social Workers: Support children, parents, and caregivers.
- School Social Workers: Address students' academic, behavioral, and social needs.
- Healthcare Social Workers: Assist patients and families navigating illness and care systems.
- Substance Use and Behavioral Health Social Workers: Support recovery and treatment planning.
- Community and Policy Social Workers: Advocate for systemic change and program development.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Social workers combine interpersonal skills with professional judgment and ethics.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Licensure Pathway

Becoming a social worker requires formal education and, often, licensure:

- Bachelor's Degree: In social work (BSW) or a related field
- Master's Degree: Master of Social Work (MSW) for clinical or advanced roles
- Supervised Field Experience: Required during degree programs
- State Licensure or Certification: Required for most professional roles
- Continuing Education: Ongoing learning to maintain licensure

Requirements vary by state and specialization.

Where Do Social Workers Work?

Social workers are employed across public, nonprofit, and private sectors:

- Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities
- Schools and Educational Institutions
- Mental Health and Counseling Centers
- Child Welfare and Family Service Agencies
- Community and Nonprofit Organizations
- Government and Social Service Agencies

Work environments range from offices and schools to homes and community settings.

How Much Do Social Workers Earn?

Earnings vary by specialization, education, and location:

- Entry-Level Social Workers: Typically earn stable professional salaries
- Clinical or Licensed Social Workers: Often earn higher pay due to advanced credentials
- Supervisory or Specialized Roles: May earn more with experience and responsibility

Compensation often includes benefits in public and nonprofit settings.

Is This Career Difficult?

Social work is emotionally demanding and requires strong boundaries and self-care. Professionals may encounter trauma, crisis situations, and systemic barriers. The challenge lies in supporting others effectively while managing emotional stress and advocating within complex systems.

Who Should Consider Becoming a Social Worker?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Want to help people navigate life challenges
- Are empathetic and emotionally resilient
- Value social justice and advocacy
- Enjoy problem-solving and collaboration
- Are comfortable working in diverse communities

How to Prepare Early

- Volunteer with community or social service organizations
- Take courses in psychology, sociology, or human development
- Develop communication and active listening skills
- Learn about social issues and public policy
- Explore accredited social work programs and field placements

Social workers strengthen individuals and communities by providing compassionate support, informed advocacy, and practical solutions that promote dignity, resilience, and long-term well-being.