SOCIAL WORK

What can I do with this degree?

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES
PUBLIC WELFARE Administration and Planning Case Management Program Evaluation Policy Setting Research	Public welfare agencies Private social service agencies	**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.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE/CORRECTIONS Counseling/Therapy Rehabilitation Probation Parole Youth Services Victim Assistance	Prisons and correctional facilities Courts Police departments Probation offices Victim services organizations	**Social workers in corrections focus on rehabilitation of clients.** Obtain experience by volunteering at a corrections facility or victims program such as a rape crisis center.
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK Clinical Social Work Pupil Personnel Services Student Advocacy Instruction	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, or Scouts.
CHILD WELFARE Case Management Advocacy Intervention	Public and private child welfare agencies Adoption agencies Foster care organizations Child daycare	**Child welfare social workers strive to ensure the safety and well-being of children through treatment of the whole family.** Volunteer at daycares, child shelters, camps, YMCA, Scouts, or other agencies that aid youth.
GERONTOLOGY Advocacy/Intervention Counseling Case Management Programming Public Policy	Hospitals Nursing homes Senior centers Assisted living Hospice	**Gerontology involves working with older adults, healthy or ill, and their families.** Get involved with programs or organizations designed for senior citizens.

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES
CLINICAL Counseling Therapy	Community mental health centers Psychiatric hospitals Residential and day treatment hospitals Employment assistance programs Schools Family service agencies Private practice	**Clinical social workers are found in a variety of settings that provide therapeutic counseling to clients.** Master of Social Work (MSW) is required.
ADMINISTRATION Management Policy Development Planning	Family service agencies Child welfare departments Social service agencies State mental health departments Employee assistance programs Probation departments Public welfare agencies Public interest groups Local, state, and federal government	**Administrators are involved with planning, budgeting, public relations, marketing, supervising, operations management, fund raising, and other crucial responsibilities that keep an organization functioning.** Obtain an MSW and gain management experience.
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION Research Teaching	Colleges and universities Research institutes Local, state and federal government Advocacy organizations	**Research provides data and statistics important in program implementation and policy development.** Doctor of Social Work (DSW) or Ph.D. usually required.
OCCUPATIONAL Counseling Education Wellness Promotion Employee Assistance Organizational Development Human Resources	Businesses Corporations Employee assistance programs Labor unions	**Occupational social workers help employees to be more productive and satisfied.**
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES Case Management Program Planning and Evaluation Research Policy Development	Community residential homes State and local agencies Medical facilities Schools	**Social workers in this area help people with disabilities to adjust and to lead productive lives.** Volunteer at special needs camps, daycares, schools, or hospitals to gain experience.

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	DESCRIPTIONS/STRATEGIES
HEALTH CARE Case Management Counseling Program Development Administration Research	Hospitals Community health centers Outpatient clinics Public health programs Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) Nursing homes Group homes Hospice Veterans Administration hospitals	**Social workers in health care facilitate medical and emotional treatment of patients.** Choose volunteer settings such as hospitals, the American Red Cross, or AIDS agencies to get experience.
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION Program and Community Development Advocacy Politics Education Planning	Advocacy organizations Development corporations Community centers Local, state, and federal government Associations	**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.** Get involved with grassroots causes and community agencies.

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. 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.
- 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.
- Note: Much of this information was adapted from Choices: Careers in Social Work by the National Association of Social Workers.

Prepared by the Career Planning staff of Career Services at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (1998, Revised 2003)
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