

SOCIAL WORK CAREER GUIDE

Revised 2023

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Introduction and Overview

The Guide begins with an introduction to BUSSW Resources, BU Career Development Services, job postings on BU Handshake and resources explaining how to use LinkedIn for your job search. It goes on to provide a step-by-step guide to preparing and going through the social work job search process. It also offers information about social work licensure and loan forbearance and forgiveness.

BUSSW Career Resources

BUSSW Student Services oversees the conveyance of career resource information to students and alumni to aid them in the employment search. Career resource information is sent to graduating social work students in their last semester in the program. Resources offered to students include workshops on licensure, loan forgiveness, resume writing, networking and job searching.

Career resource information is available on the BUSSW webpage at <http://www.bu.edu/ssw/students/current/career/>. This includes the Career Guide, the Social Work Licensure and the Loan Forgiveness presentations, Social Work job database links and the BUSSW graduate salary survey.

The BU Center for Career Development (CCD)

The University offers more comprehensive services to all BU students at www.bu.edu/careers located at 100 Bay State Road, Boston, MA, telephone: 617-353-3590

The BU Center for Career Development provides services for on-campus and off-campus students. These services include [workshops](#) on career-related topics, [resume and cover letter reviews](#), mock interviews, [individual career counseling sessions](#), and internship or job search strategies. To schedule an appointment with a CCD counselor, go to <https://www.bu.edu/careers/resources/appointments/>.

Online students and alumni are welcome to utilize the information available on the CCD website which includes resources and other useful information using interactive medium, videos, and infographics. Additional career resources for Online students and alumni can be found at <http://www.bu.edu/careers/resources/online/> and at <https://www.bu.edu/grad/career-development/>.

BU Handshake

[BU Handshake](#) is an online hub for career resources, including a job and internship posting system that allows employers to electronically post jobs and allows you to view jobs and, in some cases, apply directly online. Remember, postings on BU Handshake are there because employers are specifically seeking BU students and alumni.

We highly recommend that you register for Handshake to be able to access jobs and get Career Fair information. You can register online at www.bu.edu/careers. All employers wishing to post full-time jobs for SSW students and alum are directed to Handshake.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn boasts that it is the world's largest job network <https://www.linkedin.com/> with over 250 million+ members. LinkedIn offers you the ability to manage your professional identity, build and engage with your professional network and access knowledge, insights and opportunities. Here is a link to a video about "[How to Create a Killer LinkedIn Profile](#)":

You can view the BU Career Development website with LinkedIn information listed under "[networking](#)."

Idealist

[Idealist](#) is a non-profit job search organization that connects people who want to do good with opportunities for action and collaboration all over the world. You can find internships, graduate programs, full and part-time jobs, and volunteer opportunities.

The rest of this guide provides you with specific tips about your job search.

Deciding What You Want To Do Within Social Work

Introduction to Self-Evaluation

You already made an important career decision when you made the move to social work. The flexibility that allows you to pursue any number of specializations within the social work profession is also one of the primary causes of career confusion for social workers. Finding your niche in the profession requires that you examine and prioritize the three elements that determine your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with any job: skills, values, and interests.

Skills: The abilities of the worker that can be used in the work setting. Workers should identify personal skills and prioritize those he/she chooses to exercise in employment and those he/she prefers to use as hobbies. For instance, a person may be a skilled clinician and a capable artist but may or may not choose to exercise those artistic skills in the workplace.

Values: Work values encompass the factors that determine the quality of work life (and sometimes personal life) in one's role, organization, or profession. Workers should prioritize these values and determine which must be present in the workplace, which are negotiable, and which are not necessary for the position to be satisfying. Examples of work values are salary, flexibility of hours, variety of work tasks, supportive environment, and autonomy.

Interests: Interests may be defined as the focus of the work performed by the worker in the work role. For social workers, for example, interests may include work with a particular population or social issue.

Employees, especially social workers, who do not meet their top requirements in regards to these three variables face the probability of burnout, a term used to describe anger and apathy that result from job stress and frustration.¹ Taking the time to reflect upon these variables may help you to locate the ideal position for you and to avoid burnout.

The following seven pages are exercises to help you to identify and prioritize your own skills, values, and interests. There is also an exercise to identify your personal qualities. Read the directions and respond honestly. You'll be surprised what you will learn about yourself.

You can also draw upon past work and volunteer experiences and ask yourself these important questions. Which skills did I enjoy and not enjoy using? Which skills did I want to use that I did not have the opportunity to exercise? What did I particularly like and dislike about the environment and how I fit into the organization? Was the mission or focus of the work in line with my own interests? If not, what topic or issue would have interested you more?

You can also study help wanted ads that hold certain appeal for you. What is it about the ads that are attractive to you? Consider the tasks, salary, the focus of the organization, etc.

The following process is worth a few hours of your time. Because you will be able to identify what is most important to you, you will be better able to convince an employer of your abilities, that you want the position for which you are interviewing, and that you are confident of your ability to fulfill the requirements of the job.

¹ Definition of burnout acquired from Barker, R.L. (1991).
The Social Work Dictionary. Silver Spring, MD: National
Association of Social Workers.

Skills

Below is a list of job-related skills that social workers may use in their work. Review the list in total. The first three columns allow you to indicate which skills you possess and how much you want to use these skills in your job. The second three columns indicate the level of development of those skills. A final column indicates the skills you do not yet possess but would like to develop in the workplace.

Indicate your desire to utilize or develop your skills by placing check marks in the appropriate boxes.

Skills	Skills I Possess and Level of Use in the Workplace			Level of Development			
	Wish to use	Would like to use occasionally	Do not wish to use	Very well-developed	Somewhat developed	Not well-developed	Hope to develop in future
1. Administering/Overseeing programs							
2. Advocating for others							
3. Assessing needs of clients/patients							
4. Budget management							
5. Coalition building /Community Organizing							
6. Consulting							
7. Educating\Training							
8. Empowering others							
9. Facilitating meetings							
10. Grant writing/ fundraising							
11. Initiating/ implementing projects							
12. Interagency liaison/ facilitating communication							
13. Interdisciplinary work							
14. Leading a process							

Skills	Skills I Possess and Level of Use in the Workplace			Level of Development			
	Wish to use	Would like to use occasionally	Do not wish to use	Very well-developed	Somewhat developed	Not well-developed	Hope to develop in future
15. Lobbying							
16. Marketing/ public relations							
17. Motivating others							
18. Negotiating/ arbitration							
19. Presenting/ public relations							
20. Program design/ development							
21. Recruiting/ outreach							
22. Research/ evaluation							
23. Supervising others							
24. Team player							
25. Treatment planning							
26. Understanding public policy/ governmental structure							
27. Other							

Values

The following is a list of employment-related values. Read through the list and select the **THREE** top values that must be in place for you to consider a job. Next, select **three** values that you would like to have in place in your next job, but that are negotiable. In doing this exercise, disregard the jobs you may have pictured yourself doing and choose the values based on what you know about yourself, your needs, and the importance of particular aspects of work to your happiness.

Values	My three top choices	My three secondary choices
Advancement opportunities: to grow and learn; take on increasing responsibilities		
Autonomy/ independence: the chance to work on projects alone and with my own discretion		
Challenge: work that is not routine and keeps me on my toes		
Creativity: work that allows me the freedom to think about alternatives and the possibility to implement some of my own ideas		
Clearly defined responsibilities: a workload and expectations that are clearly articulated and understood by me and my supervisor		
Decision-making authority: the ability to become an authority on a topic area within my work		
Developing professional expertise: the ability to become an authority on a topic area within my work		
Diversity of tasks: to be involved in a variety of different projects		
Fringe benefits: excellent health, dental, vacation time, tax-deferrable options, etc. available to me as an employee		
Fame/notoriety: to have people recognize my name as an authority on something		
Flexibility of schedule: to have the ability to shape my own schedule		
Geographic location: where I work is an easy commute and short distance from where I live		
Good supervision: a supervisor who is accessible, clear, constructive w/ feedback, supportive, etc.		

Values	My three top choices	My three secondary choices
Intellectual stimulation: work that challenges my intelligence		
Interdisciplinary setting: to work with people from several different professions		
Job security: not having to worry about the funding of my position or the importance of my work to the institution		
Knowledgeable/ expert co-workers: to be surrounded by co-workers who are intelligent and who have a great deal of knowledge about the work we have in common		
Lack of stress: a relaxed atmosphere w/out a lot of pressure from deadlines and/or heavy workload		
Leadership responsibilities: the chance to take charge of projects and/or facilitate a process		
Power: the ability to create change and see that things work the way I want them to		
Respect: feeling that my co-workers, constituents, and superiors admire and express their respect for me and my work		
Salary: to make a wage I feel is consistent with the quality of work that I do		
Social justice/ creating change: feeling like my work makes a difference		
Support: co-workers who are understanding and support me in my goals, approach to my work, etc.		
Seeing things through: being able to complete tasks from beginning to end		
Team work: being the member of a team that works together to address a common goal		
Other:		

Interests

Below is a list of job interests that include social issues, types of service and particular populations with whom you may work with as a social worker. Select up to **THREE** primary populations, issues, settings/types of work with which/whom you feel most dedicated to serving. Next, select up to **three** populations, issues, settings/types of work that are of secondary interest to you.

Indicate your interests by placing check marks in the appropriate boxes.

Population Interests	My top three interests	My secondary interests
Children		
Adolescents		
Young adults		
Elders		
Families		
Men		
Women		
Couples		
People of Color		
Middle/upper income populations		
Lesbians and/or gay men		
Single parents		
Refugees/ immigrants		
People with HIV/AIDS		
Homeless people		
Victims of domestic violence		
Victims of physical and/or sexual abuse		
Perpetrators of violence		
Substance abusers/ addicts		
People with disabilities		
People with mental health issues		

People with health issues		
Veterans		
Issues (settings/types of work)	My top three interests	My secondary interests
Public policy/public systems		
Public programs (e.g., TAFDC, Medicaid, Social Security)		
Housing		
Child protective services		
Day care		
Foster care/adoption		
School systems		
Special education		
Correctional facilities		
Legal system		
Health/public health		
Mental health		
Family planning		
Long term care (e.g., hospice)		
Employee assistance programs/ services		
Private practice		
Day treatment settings		
Residential settings		
Ambulatory/out-patient settings		
Community-based programs/services		

Prioritize Your Skills, Values, and Interests

Refer back to the work you just completed on skills, values and interests and fill out the chart below. Fill in the first block of the chart with the three skills you most want to use in your job and the level of development of each skill. Fill in the second skills box with those skills you listed as being important to you but ones you wish to use only occasionally in your work. Also include the level of development for each of these skills. Fill in the third skills box with those skills you do not currently possess but wish to develop.

Fill in the first values box with those values you indicated are of primary importance in your job. List those values that are negotiable in the second values box.

Fill in the first interest's box with the three social issues, service areas, or populations with which/whom you wish to work. List up to three social issues, service areas, or populations with which/whom you would like to work occasionally.

	SKILLS	VALUES	INTERESTS
M A N D A T O R Y	<u>Skill Level of development</u>	<u>Primary values</u>	<u>Primary Interests</u>
	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
N E G O T I A B L E	3.	3.	3.
	<u>Skill Level of Development</u>	<u>Secondary values</u>	<u>Secondary Interests</u>
	1.	1.	1.
T O D E V E L O P	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
	<u>Skills to Develop</u>		
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		

Personality Traits

The follow page lists a number of personality traits. Please indicate those which you believe you possess as well as those traits you would like to have in a supervisor.

Personality Traits:	Traits that describe me	Traits I'd like in a supervisor
Adaptable/ flexible		
Adventurous		
Approachable		
Authoritative		
Careful		
Consistent		
Cooperative/ a team player		
Creative/ innovative		
Dependable		
Driven		
Dynamic		
Efficient		
Experienced		
Firm		
Independent		
Methodical		
Neat		
Organized		
Perceptive		
Perfectionist		
Persistent		
Pioneer		
Precise		
Procrastinator		
Private		
Practical		
Risk taker		
Quick learner		
Self-motivated		
Supportive		
Tactful		
Thorough		
Trustworthy		
Versatile		
Other:		
Other:		

Now You Know: Using the Skills, Values, and Interests Tools

You have just prioritized what are perhaps the most important aspects of any job and the factors that determine your satisfaction with your work. These tools provide a synopsis of the characteristics you should look for in job advertisements, and informational and job interviews. You have decided that there are certain skills, values, and interests that must be met in the workplace and others that are negotiable. You have also indicated some skills you would like to develop. Now, when you look for employment you can use this list to screen employment opportunities and to direct your search.

You can also use what you have learned in these exercises in interviews to talk about those skills you wish to use and the level of development of each. If all of the skills you wish to use are not well-developed, you may need to consider methods for developing these skills before an employer will hire you to use them as the primary part of your practice. These skills may be honed through continuing education programs, training institutes, professional organizations, etc.

You can also formulate questions for potential employers based on the skills, values, and interests that must be present for you to be fulfilled by a job. Use those questions to evaluate the job, agency, supervision, benefits, etc., to determine if they meet your standards. Knowing what you need is empowering because it allows you to interview the potential employer.

The exercise regarding personal qualities is yet another step toward self-evaluation and understanding. Standardized personality tests (such as the Myer's Briggs Personality Inventory) or skills inventories (e.g. the Strong Skills Inventory) are also available for a reasonable fee through the Career Development Office, or through other counseling centers. Having completed a comprehensive self-evaluation process will allow you to convince the employer that you have done the introspection to know what you can do well, what you have yet to learn, what is important to you, and how you will fit into the organization.

If, after completing the process, you are still unsure about the kind of social work you want to practice, you may wish to contact and meet with a counselor at the Boston University Center for Career Development at 100 Bay State Road on the sixth floor, 617-353-3590 or bucareer@bu.edu.

Macro Social Work Careers

A guide to macro social work, "Building the KASE for Social Work Students to Achieve Success in Macro Practice," can be found [here](#).

Networking and Informational Interviewing

Networking is perhaps the best way to hear about jobs. Informational interviewing is perhaps the best way to *network* when looking for a new job, considering a career change, or defining your interests.

The **BUSSW Career Consultants Network (CAN)** is a volunteer network of alumni in selected geographical areas who are willing to assist students and other alumni with general career information

<https://www.bu.edu/alumni/careers/career-development-resources/career-advisory-network/>

Although the network is available, it is not the only way to establish contacts. The more assertive you are in your networking, the better your chances of uncovering the job that fits your skills, values, and interests. Each time you talk to people in the field, ask if they know anyone else who might be helpful to you. Seek out people within agencies of interest to you and request a brief informational interview. As busy as people are, they generally like to talk about what they do and how they got there.

Preferably, a prospective interviewee would like to be contacted by letter with an enclosed resume. In the letter, you should include:

1. An introduction - Who you are
2. How you got his/her name
3. Why you are writing
4. Next steps - When you will next be in contact

A phone call is not unacceptable, but the letter makes a good impression and gives the person time to review your resume and think about what he/she might have to say to you. Basically, you are asking the person to share his/her experiences with you. You can get a sense of what the person does within the specialty area and agency, tips for job searching and networking, and a sense of the person's career path.

Informational interviewing gives the person a chance to meet and like you. Although you can interview by phone, interviewing in person is preferable because you would like your new contact to feel comfortable referring you should a job open in the agency. It is important to make clear to the interviewee that you are not asking for a job when you contact him/her. However, if you are impressive, he/she will remember you should a position become available.

Networking is also important because people actually practicing the social work you want to practice can give you the best sense of prospects in the field, including which agencies may have picked up contracts or received grant monies to hire or start new programs.

Be prepared for the interview. Know what you want to ask. You don't have to know exactly what you want to do with your life, nor do you need to know exactly which job you want. You can use the interview to shape your ideas about these things. You should, however, go in with questions that will help you get the information you need to make some decisions and expand your network.

You should not ask the interviewer to contact you. Make it clear how you can be reached, but tell him/her you will follow-up your letter with a call within a week or two.

Suggested Questions for Informational Interviews

1. How did you decide to do this work?
2. How did you get started with this work and agency?
3. What are the best/worst aspects of your job and this line of work?
4. How is your time divided between people, data, and things?
5. If possible, describe a typical workday, workweek, and work year.
6. What are the kinds of jobs one could pursue in this specialty area?
5. Describe your job search and path to this job?
6. How long did it take you to find your first job in this specialty area of social work?
7. What has been the greatest challenge you have faced in your career thus far?
8. How valuable is social work considered in this organization?
9. Do you feel your education prepared you for the job(s) you've done and employer expectations of you?
10. What do you know now that you wish you had known when looking for your first post-M.S.W. job or this current job?
11. Would a geographic move affect your job in any way?
12. How much work do you take home? How many hours do you work each week?
13. How often do you travel for work and for how long?
14. Whom do you supervise and to whom do you report? (You are looking for organizational structure.)
15. Is there anyone else with whom I should speak for additional information?

Be sure to follow-up the interview with a **thank you note** (either a card or a formal letter is acceptable and appropriate) and highlight what was valuable about the interview.

Sample Letter Requesting Informational Interview

878 Oak Grove
Boston, MA 02215

February 23, 2023

Lanark Andrew, Director
Children's and Youth Services
123 Callahan Street
Boston, MA 02216

Dear Ms. or Mr. Andrew: (* **Call the agency and find out the contact person's full name.**
This is more effective than using Dear Sir/Madam)

My name is Karen Donough, and I will be completing the M.S.W. program at Boston University in May. I received your name from Joan DeKnows at Children and Family Services West. She recommended you as a valuable resource to someone who is interested in protective services.

I am hoping you might be willing to set up an informational interview at your convenience. I would be happy to come to the agency to meet with you or to interview by phone if that would be more convenient for you.

I am particularly interested in your own job search and career path, how you chose child protection and Children's and Youth Services, and what you feel are the advantages and disadvantages of working for a private versus public agency. My current field placement is with the Department of Social Services, but I would like to explore other possibilities in this area. I have enclosed a copy of my resume so you can see the kind of work I have done.

You can reach me at 617-783-0999 if you would like or I can call within the next two weeks to see whether we will be able to meet. Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Karen Donough

General Guidelines for Resume Writing

Your resume is an encapsulated presentation of your experiences, strengths, successes, etc. It should be easy-to-read and laid out with headline, categories, boldface, and underlining of important information.

Most employers give a resume a fifteen-second review during the initial phase of the recruiting process.

Although they may review your resume in more detail later, should you make it beyond the initial screening process, you must catch their attention quickly and clearly to get that far. During that fifteen seconds, the employer should be able to spot the qualities you possess that make you a promising candidate.

There are several formats you can consider that may best package your qualifications. The resume examples included in this section may help you pick the style most appropriate for you. The worksheet in this section can get you started by putting your information on paper.

Be as specific as possible:

1. Tailor your resume to the specialty field or job you want. You can write a general resume to get started, but as you narrow your interests, you will want to package your experience in a way that will most likely catch the attention of employers.
2. You do not have to list an objective on your resume. In fact, unless you will be able to change it to correspond to each job for which you apply, you should leave the objective off the resume and use the cover letter to spell out what you want in a job. If an objective is too general, the employer will think you do not know what you want. If it is too specific and not perfectly in line with the job opening, the employer will assume his/her job is not your first choice.

DO:

- Use phrases starting with an action verb (see list on page 18).
- Use language that creates a vivid picture for employers.
- Keep descriptions brief, but give a picture of the populations you served; the social, medical, and/or psychological issues with which you have worked; the social work skills you have practiced.
- Include issues with which you've dealt that would be transferable and of value to nearly any setting (i.e. substance abuse, sexual abuse, etc.)
- Use quantities, amounts, dollar values, when possible (i.e., managed \$250,000 annual budget).
- Use professional terminology when appropriate.
- Be consistent with use of boldface, underlining, capitalizing, and italics.
- Send a cover letter with your resume.

DON'T:

- Use personal pronouns (I or we).
- Include personal data (age, gender, race, etc.).
- Include a photograph.
- List street addresses of schools, former employers, etc.
- Have any grammatical errors or typos (*Hint* - read the resume backward to check for typos).
- Send your resume without a cover letter.

Categorizing your resume:

You can use general headings for objective, education, honors, research, skills, and interests. It is best to use specific headings for work experience. This section presents those experiences you believe represent the work you've done that prepares you for the position for which you are applying. Examples of specific headings follows:

- Human Services Experience
- Community Organizing Experience
- Administrative Experience
- Program Planning Experience
- Clinical Experience
- Therapeutic and Advocacy Experience
- Child Welfare Experience
- Experience with Children and Families
- Experience in Gerontology
- Substance Abuse Treatment Experience ...and so on...

You may have two categories to advertise and emphasize two sets of relevant experiences. For instance, you may be applying for a job that requires administrative experience and experience with children. You may not have administrative experience in a children's program, but you may have experience from other employment. These are "transferable" skills (from one job to another), and are worth emphasizing.

Education:

If you are just graduating, the M.S.W. is your most recent degree so you will probably want to begin with this section on your resume to call attention to it. Over time, after you accumulate more experience, you will want to move this section nearer the end of your resume.

- Try to keep the educational experience together (i.e. honors, research).
- If you are comfortable and proud of your GPA, it is fine to list it with your education.
- Don't forget to list concentration, degree, and graduation date. Also include dual degree, or certificate program information, if applicable.

Experience:

This is usually considered the most important section by employers and most will admit that the skills acquired during activities, internships, volunteer experience, etc. are as valuable as paid positions. Those should be listed and highlighted. Under the heading for specific and related experience (i.e. child welfare experience) you can list these experiences along with paid employment in the same field. If you are a new graduate, the name of the agency is generally more eye-catching than your title (i.e. social work intern), so you should list the agency before you give your title.

Skills:

In this section, you should highlight any skills or talents you have that may be useful in the workplace and that separate you from other applicants. For example: Fluency or proficiency in a foreign language or American Sign Language; certifications in CPR or Outdoor Leadership; public speaking training; computer skills such as use and programming experience.

Other Categories:

If you have designed and delivered speeches and workshops or if you have been published, you may want to organize a category to highlight these skills. If you have work experience that does not fit in the "specific" categories you designed and you want to include it, you could add a category called "Other Work Experience." You can also add categories for specialized training, relevant research, etc.

Length: As a general rule, resumes should be one page. Human service professionals, however, can afford to have more than one page if the experience included within the resume is relevant and important to your social work career. Your most important experience should be listed on the first page if possible. However, if you do choose to have a two-page resume, it should be a full two pages, not one and a half pages. If your resume is less than two pages, but over one page, you may want to consider cutting out the least relevant experience such as non-human service experience. Additionally, undergraduate experience can be removed to make room for graduate experience.

Action Verbs: (Use in present tense if currently using skill.)

Abstracted	Chartered	Delegated	Expedited	Integrated	Offered
Accommodated	Checked	Delivered	Experimented	Interpreted	Operated
Achieved	Clarified	Demonstrated	Explained	Interviewed	Ordered
Acquainted	Classified	Designated	Explored	Introduced	Organized
Acquired	Coached	Detected	Expressed	Invented	Originated
Acted	Collaborated	Determined	Extracted	Inventoried	Overcame
Adapted	Collected	Developed	Facilitated	Investigated	Oversaw
Addressed	Combined	Devised	Fashioned	Judged	Participated
Administered	Comforted	Diagnosed	Financed	Kept	Perceived
Advertised	Communicated	Directed	Fixed	Launched	Perfected
Advised	Compared	Discovered	Followed	Learned	Performed
Advocated	Compiled	Discriminated	Formulated	Lectured	Persuaded
Aided	Completed	Dispatched	Fostered	Led	Piloted
Allocated	Composed	Dispensed	Founded	Lifted	Planned
Analyzed	Computed	Displayed	Gained	Listed	Practiced
Answered	Conceived	Dissected	Gathered	Listened	Predicted
Anticipated	Conceptualized	Distributed	Gave	Located	Prepared
Applied	Conducted	Diverted	Generated	Logged	Prescribed
Appraised	Conferred	Documented	Governed	Made	Presented
Approved	Conserved	Drafted	Guided	Maintained	Prioritized
Arbitrated	Consolidated	Drove	Handled	Managed	Processed
Arranged	Constructed	Edited	Headed	Manipulated	Produced
Ascertained	Consulted	Educated	Helped	Mapped	Programmed
Assembled	Contracted	Eliminated	Identified	Marketed	Projected
Assessed	Contributed	Emphasized	Illustrated	Mastered	Promoted
Assisted	Controlled	Empowered	Imagined	Maximized	Proposed
Assumed	Converted	Enabled	Implemented	Mediated	Protected
Attained	Cooperated	Encouraged	Improved	Memorized	Proved
Audited	Coordinated	Enforced	Improvised	Mentored	Provided
Augmented	Copied	Enlightened	Inaugurated	Met	Publicized
Authorized	Correlated	Enlisted	Increased	Minimized	Published
Balanced	Corresponded	Ensured	Indexed	Modeled	Purchased
Bolstered	Counseled	Established	Indicated	Modernized	Queried
Briefed	Created	Estimated	Influenced	Modified	Questioned
Brought	Critiqued	Evaluated	Informed	Monitored	Raised
Budgeted	Cultivated	Examined	Initiated	Motivated	Ran
Built	Dealt	Exceeded	Inspected	Narrated	Ranked
Calculated	Debated	Excelled	Inspired	Negotiated	Rationalized
Cared	Decided	Executed	Instituted	Observed	Read
Charged	Defined	Expanded	Instructed	Obtained	Realized

Reasoned	Reported	Set	Strategized	Symbolized	Undertook
Received	Represented	Shaped	Streamlined	Synthesized	Unified
Recommended	Researched	Shared	Strengthened	Systematized	United
Reconciled	Resolved	Simplified	Stressed	Tabulated	Updated
Recorded	Responded	Sketched	Studied	Talked	Upgraded
Recruited	Restored	Sold	Substantiated	Taught	Utilized
Reduced	Revamped	Solicited	Succeeded	Tended	Validated
Referred	Reviewed	Solved	Suggested	Tested	Verified
Regulated	Scanned	Sorted	Summarized	Theorized	Visualized
Related	Scheduled	Spearheaded	Supervised	Trained	Weighed
Relied	Screened	Specialized	Supplemented	Translated	Won
Removed	Selected	Spoke	Supplied	Traveled	Wrote
Reorganized	Separated	Sponsored	Surveyed	Treated	
Repaired	Served	Stimulated	Sustained	Tutored	

Resume Worksheet

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____

Objective: (*optional* and use only if you have a specific job in mind and that job matches the one for which you are applying)

Education: (School, City, State)

Degree/date expected:

Concentration:

Dual Degree/Certificate Program:

Relevant Course work or Research Projects:

Honors/Awards:

Experience: (choose appropriate heading(s) and organize the experiences you list below after you have written descriptions)

Organization, City, State, Position, Dates you were there:

Organization, City, State, Position, Dates you were there:

Organization, City, State, Position, Dates you were there:

Organization, City, State, Position, Dates you were there:

Professional Memberships:

Skills:

Interests (*optional*):

SAMPLE CLINICAL RESUME

Jane A. Smith

123 Friend Street • Boston, MA 02110 • (617) 999-9999 • janea@bu.edu

EDUCATION

Master of Social Work
BOSTON UNIVERSITY

May 2023 (expected)
Boston, MA

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

May 1997
New York, NY

EXPERIENCE

Social Work Intern
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

2021-present
Boston, MA

- Provide supportive counseling and case management services to patients on the Oncology Unit
- Conduct psychosocial assessments
- Co-facilitate a support group for breast cancer patients
- Participate in multidisciplinary team meetings and family conferences
- Collaborate with multidisciplinary team members on behalf of patients

Social Work Intern
NEW ENGLAND HOME FOR LITTLE WANDERERS

Summer 2020
Jamaica Plain, MA

- Provided individual and group therapy to adolescents with emotional and behavioral issues
- Co-facilitated anger management and social skills groups for adolescents aged 13-16
- Conducted family assessments
- Developed treatment plans and coordinated with Department of Social Services staff

Counselor
JEWISH VOCATIONAL SERVICE

2017-2021
Boston, MA

- Provided counseling and job search assistance to individuals with disabilities and dislocated workers
- Assessed training needs and assisted clients in obtaining federal funding for training programs
- Coordinated with state agency staff on behalf of job-seekers with disabilities
- Facilitated workshops focusing on interviewing skills and job skills assessment
- Developed and conducted staff training regarding disability and employment issues

Case Coordinator
MASSACHUSETTS HOSPITAL SCHOOL

2016-2017
Canton, MA

- Provided counseling and case management services to young adults with disabilities
- Conducted supported living assessments
- Developed individualized supported living service plans
- Coordinated community resources to assist individuals in achieving vocational, educational, and recreational goals

Counselor
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DISABLED

2014 -2016
New York, NY

- Provided vocational counseling to adults with physical and psychiatric disabilities
- Developed individualized vocational training plans
- Facilitated a vocational skills training group

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

2018-present

COVER LETTER

Your present address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Specific Name
Title
Agency/Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Dr., Mr. or Ms. _____:

Opening paragraph - Tell why you are writing, naming the position or field or general area of work about which you are inquiring. Mention how you learned about the opening and/or organization.

Middle paragraph - Talk about your qualifications. Do not repeat information from your resume verbatim. Do not list jobs. Make it clear why you are interested in the position and why they should be interested in you. The key is to highlight your skills, work with the population(s) of interest, and work with systems and issues important to the position and agency of interest. Mention specific results or achievements. This section is key and the one that can differentiate you from the next candidate.

Closing paragraph - Close by making a specific request. Usually reiterate that you would like an interview. State how the person can reach you but be sure to mention that you will follow up the letter with a phone call with a week (or two weeks) to see if there is any further information you can provide for the employer. Thank the employer for her/his time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Your name typed

REMEMBER: NEVER SEND A RESUME WITHOUT A COVER LETTER!

Sample Cover Letter

Sharon E. Oliver
59 Yellowbird Drive
Bedford, MA 01730
(617) 100-0000

February 23, 2023

Karen McCoy, Director
Humanity, Inc.
375 High Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Ms. McCoy,

As I near the end of my Master of Social Work program, I have begun to search for jobs in program planning and evaluation. Margaret Hampton, your former co-worker, knew of my interest in services for teenage mothers and phoned to describe the position to me.

I had a great deal of experience in research before returning to graduate school. I have brought that experience to my field training and have completed a yearlong outcome evaluation on children's support programs for the Boston Public Schools. I have also had the opportunity to plan an after-school program as part of the internship. Following the introduction of the program, I assisted in grant writing and lobbying for funds to continue the program. I have recently worked with Dr. Ann Cameron on her research program on the efficacy of support services to single mothers.

Your position is appealing because it affords the opportunity to apply my research and planning skills to a social issue that I care about and because it allows for close working relationships with both public and private service providers while spending a great deal of time working autonomously.

I would enjoy the opportunity to interview with you for this position and to discuss your organization in more detail. You can reach me at 617-100-1000. I will call you in two weeks to see if there is anything further that I can provide. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Sharon E. Oliver

Interviewing Guidelines

This is perhaps the most nerve-wracking part of the job search process because it is common to walk into an interview feeling as though you are at the mercy of the interviewer. Although difficult, it is beneficial to view the interview as a two way process. You must evaluate the setting, people, and position to know whether the fit will be a good one. If you are prepared to do that and to talk about yourself and what you can bring to the agency or organization, you are ready and need not worry. Refer back to the skills, values, and interests section to formulate the kind of information you want to take away from the interview and the kind of information you want the interviewer to know so he/she will be convinced you know yourself and what is right for you.

Below are basic guidelines that will allow you to relax in knowing you are ready to go!

1. Be prepared:

Do your homework. Know yourself. Complete the skills, values, and interests assignments if you have not already done so. Know which of your skills, values, and interests are useful, relevant, applicable and/or essential to the job opening and organization. Know what the agency does, the kinds of services provided, the populations served. Give serious thought to why you want to work in that agency and with that population delivering those particular services.

You cannot know everything about the agency, but learn what you can. Most organizations have web pages where you can research the agency. For companies that do not have web pages, see if you can get an annual report and any materials used for outreach and advertising. Use *Nexus/Lexus* at Mugar Library or other reference sources to search for information on the agency or on social issues, policy decisions, etc., that might affect the agency. Talk to faculty, staff, and alumni about the agency and the issues related to it. Figure out what you don't know and formulate questions based on the gaps in your information. A list of questions you may want to ask is included at the end of this section. Knowing all that you can about the agency will help you talk about your goals and demonstrate how they are in line with the goals of the agency.

2. Packaging:

Your appearance is a sign of respect for the interviewer, the agency, and the field. Although social work staff at many agencies may dress casually on the job, do not take this as a sign you can present yourself casually at an interview (no jeans, shorts, or sandals). Keep your appearance simple and appropriate for the job, i.e., if the job involves contact with corporate clients and board members demonstrate that you understand the business culture, including attire. Save the latest trend-setting fashions and accessories for social occasions.

3. Enthusiasm goes a long way:

Your voice and body language say a lot about your interest in the job and about your energy-level. In this case, being yourself means answering questions the way that you would if you were not in a job interview. You should speak as if having a conversation with another professional who is trying to learn more about you. You will be more relaxed if you aren't trying to sit, speak, look, and sound like someone else.

Your best opportunity to show enthusiasm is in asking questions. Whether throughout the interview or at the end, be sure to have questions ready for the interviewer(s). Show that you are thoughtful and that you make careful choices regarding your job search. Show that you are curious. Do not, however, just fill the air for fear of silence. When you run out of questions and relevant information to share, let the interview be over. Silence is generally the greatest fear for interviewees. Extended and repeated silences may indicate that you have both shared what you needed to and have come to an appropriate ending of a meaningful exchange.

It will help if you practice with someone else or at least practice in front of a mirror. Mock interviewing, or practicing within someone else, is preferable because the other person can point out habits you may have such as say "uhh", slouching in your chair, shaking your foot, etc.

4. Ease of the interview:

As crazy as it sounds, try to put the interviewer at ease. Use familiar and appropriate humor and seem self-assured. The greatest fallacy of the job search process is that interviewers always know what they are doing and that they try to be intimidating. The majority are not professional interviewers. Most are human service professionals who have a full-time job and have been asked to lead the recruiting process in addition to other responsibilities. They do not necessarily know how to access the best and most useful information from candidates and know that the wrong choice of a candidate will be their responsibility. You might say that interviewers have a reason to be nervous. If you can make it "easy to be with you" and you seem sure of yourself, the interviewer is likely to enjoy the interview and being with you. Your major task will be to give the interviewer the information you think is most important and applicable to the job opening.

5. Be honest, positive, and thoughtful:

Although it is difficult when nervous, listen to the questions carefully before responding. Taking a second to think shows you are a thoughtful person and will allow you to answer honestly with relevant information. Silences will seem longer to you than they do to the interviewer.

A list of improper questions, that is questions that are inappropriate or illegal for the employer to ask, follows. You should give serious consideration to how you will handle it if asked one of these questions. You may wish to ask if the employer feels that information is important and/or crucial to fulfilling the position. Because not all persons with whom you will interview do it professionally, they may not be aware of the legal guidelines. You may choose to reveal information to the following questions, but know that employers are not supposed to ask. It is up to you to decide how you will handle such questions.

Improper Questions and Interviewing

Interviewers should not ask about:²

1. Age
2. Date of birth
3. Previous address
4. How long at present address
5. National origin
6. Religion
7. Name of priest, rabbi, or minister
8. Father's surname
9. Mother's surname
10. Maiden name
11. Do you have children
12. Age(s) of your child(ren)
13. How many children
14. Who will care for your children
15. Marital status
16. Spouse's place of employment
17. Spouse's residence
18. Parents' residence
19. Parents' place of employment
20. Whether residence is owned or rented
21. Loans or financial problems
22. Wage attachments
23. Personal bankruptcy
24. If ever arrested
25. Legal convictions, unless relevant to the job
26. Foreign languages spoken, unless required by the job
27. Race
28. Memberships in social organizations
29. Attitudes towards geographical relocation, unless required by the job
30. Height and weight, unless required by the job
31. Type of military discharge
32. Sexual orientation
33. Gender

It is important to think about how you will respond if asked one of the above questions. There is no right or wrong answer; your approach should be based on your individual style. One possible response might be, "could you tell me how that question is related to the job?"

Remember that there are numerous questions, some of which may feel intrusive, that the employer may legally ask. Some of these questions follow.

² List provided by the Career Services Office of the Bryn Mawr College School of Social Work.

Interviewers may ask about:

1. Reasons for termination of previous employment
2. About references
3. Work schedule
4. Previous work experiences
5. Job related feelings about previous assignments or present position
6. Career interests
7. Job duties
8. Education and training
9. Job related professional associations
10. Qualifications for duties related to the job.
11. Citizenship

In the course of being honest with your answers, try to be positive. Even if a question is posed in a negative way, practice turning it around so that your response takes on a positive light. The following example demonstrates how you might do this.

Question: What is your greatest weakness?

Negative answer: I would say that I haven't had much experience making DSM-V diagnoses.

Positive answer: I would say the thing I am most excited about is building on my experience making DSM-V diagnoses.

5. Have examples of the skills you claim:

Your explanations of why they should hire you will be more powerful if backed up with objective facts. No one knows your history better than you. Think about the skills you have and when you have used them. Consider difficult tasks and conflicts that you have had to deal with and how you handled them. Consider challenges to your values and what keeps you interested in a job. Be ready to give examples in response to commonly asked questions. A list of these questions is included in this section.

6. Ending the interview:

Try to sense when the interview is over. Be sure you understand the next steps in the process before you leave. Do you need to furnish more information? Will they call or write or should you contact them? If there is to be any discussion of salary and benefits in the first interview, it should come near the end. This discussion usually takes place in subsequent interviews. Use the first interview to express your sincere interest in the agency and job. Always send a thank you letter or card to all who interview you.

7. Second interviews and call-backs:

Organizations do not call all candidates back for a second interview. They simply do not have time. So, if you get asked back, they are interested in you. This time around, you will probably be introduced to more people within the agency and will be asked similar questions about why you want the job, about your skills, etc. They are trying to finalize their decision and they are giving you serious consideration. Only go to a second interview if you are serious about the position.

Sometimes you will have a round of interviews on the first day or sometimes you will be called back. Whatever the format, be prepared. Practice, get a good night's sleep the night before, carry extra resumes.

Most Commonly Asked Questions In Interviews

1. What are your long and short-term goals and how did you come to have them?
2. How are you preparing yourself to meet these goals?
3. What do you see yourself doing in five years?
4. What would you be if you could be anything?
5. What are the rewards you expect in the career path you have chosen and in this job?
6. What do you expect to be earning in five years?
7. Why did you choose this career?
8. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
9. How would your friends describe you?
10. What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
11. How has your education prepared you for this work?
12. How has your work experience prepared you for this work?
13. Why should I hire you?
14. How do you define success for yourself?
15. What is success to you?
16. What kind of contributions can you make to our organization?
17. What do you look for in a supervisor?
18. Describe the qualities of a good manager.
19. What have been your three most satisfying accomplishments?
20. If you were hiring someone for this position, what would you look for?
21. Why did you select BUSSW? What was good/bad about your experience?
22. Do you have plans to continue your studies?
23. Are your grades a mark of your professional aptitude?
24. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
25. In what kind of environment do you like to work?
26. How do you handle stress and pressure?
27. Why do you want to work for this organization?
28. Which criteria do you use to evaluate an organization?
29. Are you willing to travel if the job requires it?
30. What have been the greatest challenges and how have you dealt with them?

Suggested Questions for You to Ask of an Interviewer

1. How long have you been here and how did you come to work here?
2. What do you like most and least about your job and this agency?
3. What would you change about this organization if you could change one thing?
4. Which qualities do you feel are most important in the person who may take the job?
5. What has your career path been like?
6. What do you think the most difficult aspects of this job are?
7. What do you think the most rewarding aspects of this job are?
8. How much opportunity is there for autonomy and for teamwork?
9. How much interaction is there amongst staff persons during and after work hours?
10. How did this job come to be available at this time?

Review skills, values and interests and inquire about the capacity for meeting your prioritized skills, values and interests within the current position for which you are applying.
--

Sample Thank You Letter

102 Brighton Avenue
Allston, MA 02134

March 1, 2023

Ms. Sandra Everett
Program Coordinator
Project HOPE
699 Hacienda Avenue
Mesa, AZ 87690

Dear Ms. Everett,

I appreciated and enjoyed speaking with you last Wednesday regarding the opening for an outpatient clinician at Project HOPE.

I am impressed by your agency's approach to meeting the needs of families, not just your adolescent clients. Your services are both holistic and comprehensive and seem to respond to the varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds of your clients. Your reflections on your experiences as a beginning therapist at Project HOPE were both amusing and helpful. I appreciate your candor.

After meeting with you, I am convinced that Project HOPE, the job opening, and my skills are compatible. My experience with a diversity of clients and presenting problems seems similar to the "typical" caseload you described. I look forward to an opportunity to use my Spanish again. In addition to my experience, I come with a great deal of enthusiasm and motivation.

I look forward to speaking to you again in the near future. Thank you for the time you spent with me and please let me know if there is anything further I can provide. I can be reached at the address and phone above after April 30, 2023. Until then, I am at (701) 855-9221.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kipme

Job Offer Letter of Decline

212 Salisbury Drive
Oberlin, NH 03426

March 1, 2023

Ms. Arial Masters
P.O. Box 935
Shenandoah Nursing Home
Carlin, NH 03525

Dear Ms. Masters,

Thank you for extending the offer of family therapist and intake coordinator to me and for giving me a week to consider the offer. As you can imagine, this time of multiple interviews has been hectic. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your consideration.

Though impressed with your program, facility, and staff, I have decided to accept another position that offers the opportunity to work with the elderly in a medical setting.

I look forward to hearing you speak at the Annual Conference for Gerontology Professionals in July. I wish you the best of luck in your continued search. Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jon Acton

Negotiating Terms of Employment

When you get to this stage of the employment process, it is important that you understand your needs and be ready to negotiate. Generally, people think of salary as being the most important thing you will negotiate. However, you need to think about many other things. The various things you will need to negotiate are outlined below with items for consideration. Remember this very important fact. Employers, like everyone else, would like to get the very best for the least amount of cost to them. They may not get everything they want in a candidate, and they may have to pay more than they would like. It is all part of the process. Nevertheless, be sure you have landed a job first before you negotiate. If you are too detail oriented before the offer has been made, sometimes employers will think you are going to be difficult.

Salary:

Salaries ranges for beginning MSWs depend on the candidate's past employment history, the job itself and the geographic region. More than 75% of the respondents in the BUSSW Class of 2016 Employment Survey reported a beginning medium salary range of \$46 - \$49,000 per year. Please be sure to balance the benefits that follow before deciding on a firm salary and decide the value of these to you. Figure out the minimum you need to live and what you think you are worth. If asked to present salary requirements, you may want to give a range, but be sure you can live with the bottom end of that range if that is what you are offered. If offered a salary with which you cannot live, be prepared to negotiate by presenting how valuable you can be to them and that you cannot live on the proposed salary. Be ready to hear that they cannot raise the salary. Not all employers have that ability, but some do.

Social Work Salary Negotiations:

It can be to your advantage to request a higher starting salary than the one you are presented with at the time of the job offer. In the business world, salary negotiation is commonplace. Social workers should also be prepared to advocate for themselves and ask for higher salaries. When negotiating salary, it is typical to ask for a few thousand more than your true "bottom line" and work down. For example, if you are offered \$40,000 as a starting salary, but want to make \$43,000, you would want to request a salary around \$46,000 and hopefully you and the employer will be able to meet in the middle. You might even end up with the high number you request! However, when asking for more, be prepared to demonstrate why your qualifications are "deserving" of a higher salary. Such evidence would include relevant field placement experience, previous social work experience, a dual degree or any other special skills that differentiate you from the next candidate.

Again, not all employers will be able accepted your request for a higher starting salary. Many social work organizations operate under a limited budget. Another way around this is to request a significant raise for the next fiscal year. You can even request to be involved in the budget process and assist with grant writing and fundraising.

Note: Be sure to have in writing all salary negotiations, especially promises of a raise in the future.

Be sure to consider all parts of “salary” including benefits (health, dental, eye care, child and/or elder care, tuition remission, 401K or other retirement plan), vacation time, supervision and continuing education. An agency with a small budget might not be able to raise your starting salary, but they may have a strong benefits package, or you may be able to negotiate your benefits package.

Supervision:

Supervision is an important benefit for any recent graduate as it promotes professional growth and development. In addition, in most states, including Massachusetts, MSWs are required to receive one hour of supervision a week provided by a licensed MSW in order to maintain, or to be eligible for a higher level of licensure. If your employer does not offer the appropriate supervision you will need to pay for supervision. This can be costly and you may want to advocate for a higher salary in order to cover this additional cost.

Please be sure to review the qualifications of your prospective supervisor to ensure that the individual has the appropriate license as required by your state. Ask to meet the supervisor in order to determine if your styles will work well together and if the person can offer you insight and help you develop professionally. Please be sure to check your state’s licensing requirements at ASWB.org.

Continuing Education/Tuition Remission:

In order to maintain your social work licensure, most states require a specified number of continuing education credits per licensure cycle. Please be sure to check your state’s licensing requirements at ASWB.org.

Vacation, sick leave, and personal time:

You must decide how much time you think you need and how what the agency is offering measures up to what you want and need. Jobs that offer few or no time off generally result in burnout of workers who feel underappreciated and over stressed.

Day care, family leave, and flexibility:

The existence and generosity of these benefits show a commitment of the agency to you and your personal life. Employers that offer these benefits often understand you have needs outside the office. You should try to determine if you will be "punching the time clock" or if the agency trusts its people to fulfill their obligations and make up time missed. You should determine how much structure you have and how valuable benefits like these are to you both personally and financially.

401K and Other Retirement Plans:

If you are offered these as options, carefully consider how valuable they are to you and the quality of the plans. You should check the investment you will have to make, how long you must be employed by the agency for the plan to pay-off, what the penalties may be if you leave the agency and want your investment back, etc. Ask around and compare the plan with others so you will know how beneficial they may be to you.

Outlining Job Responsibilities:

In addition to the benefits outlined above, you should consider the many terms of employment that you are signing on to provide for the agency. For instance, you should clarify the average

size of your caseload, the number of hours you will work, the ratio of client contact to paperwork, the amount of time on the road, the type of services you will provide and the skills you will exercise.

Put it in writing!

When you accept the job, you should write a letter outlining the terms of employment as you understand them and request any modifications in writing before you begin work. You would like to think that what you are offered is what you will get but that is not always so. It is better to be safe than sorry. You would not want to start the job search process over again because your supervision fell through or your job is not what you were promised. An example of a letter of acceptance follows.

Letter of Acceptance

444 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10023

March 1, 2023

Dr. Eric A. Jonas Jr.
Shimayee Reservation School
Sioux-City, SD 50014

Dear Dr. Jonas,

As we discussed in our phone conversation, I am pleased to accept the position of school counselor. I have taken the liberty of outlining the terms of employment, as I understand them. If there is to be a change or if I have misunderstood, please let me know in writing within two weeks from the date of this letter.

I understand that I will be providing individual and family counseling to an average weekly caseload of 25 clients or families. I will also supervise student volunteers in the after-school program in weekly meetings and individual sessions as needed. I understand that I am required to maintain all case files on my caseload that, as you explained, takes about twenty minutes each week for each case.

The salary we negotiated begins at \$38,500 with yearly reviews and merit raises. I will enroll in the Met Health and Dental plan and am able to be reimbursed up to \$200 in conferences or training per year. Jennifer Cones will provide supervision one hour per week on-site. I also understand that I am entitled to 21 days of paid leave per year to be used for vacation, sick, or personal time.

I cannot tell you how excited I am to begin working with you and the staff at the school. I enjoyed our interviews and believe we will all work well together. I look forward to seeing you on June 15, 2023, my first day of work.

Sincerely,

Allison Bankit

Social Work Licensure

Who should be licensed?

Each state may have their own provisions. Practice is defined as rendering or offering to render professional service for any fee, monetary or otherwise, to individuals, families, or groups of individuals, which services involve the application of social work theory and methods in the prevention, treatment, or resolution of mental and emotional disorders or family or social dysfunction caused by physical illness, intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict or environmental stress. Such professional services may include, but shall not be limited to, the formulation of a psychosocial evaluation, counseling, and psychotherapy of a nonmedical nature, referral to community resources, and the development and provision of educational programs. Individuals performing administrative or educational functions are not required to be licensed, but, since there is considerable overlap with “practice,” it is strongly recommended that ALL Social Workers obtain a license.

The [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\)](#) states that “The purpose of licensing and certification in social work is to assist the public through identification of standards for the safe professional practice of social work. Each jurisdiction defines by law what is required for each category of social work licensure. Typically, there are four categories of practice that jurisdictions may legally regulate.”

How do I become a licensed social worker?

Each state determines their own licensing requirements, license title, license hierarchy and license specific to majors (clinical or macro). Please be sure to review your state of interest licensing regulations carefully to ensure that you meet all the requirements. Please note that some states require additional or specific training and/or coursework.

How do I prepare for the licensing exam?

Graduates wishing to pursue additional preparation for the licensing exam can access the following resources which offer study courses, programs, and guides for a fee:

- www.SWES.net (800) 993-8802 www.AATBS.com (800) 472-1931
- Study guides that contain sample test questions can be purchased through ASWB.
- NASW Licensing Test Prep Course offered by NASW state chapters (www.socialworkers.org)

How do I go about getting the license?

You can begin the licensing process by reviewing your state’s licensing requirements at the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), (888) 579-3926, www.aswb.org/

- Links to each state’s licensing board is available at: <http://aswbsocialworkregulations.org/licensingWebsitesReportBuilder.jsp>
- The social work examination for licensing is handled by the [ASWB](#).
- Boston University School of Social Work provides information regarding social work licensing disclosures and links to each state licensing board [HERE](#).

Can I get hired before I have a social work license?

Many job postings state licensing as a requirement for candidates. However, many employers will consider licensed eligible social workers. You should convey to the prospective employer your intent to apply for social work licensure. Recent MSW graduates have obtained employment prior to becoming licensed but often this is contingent upon becoming licensed.

What are Temporary Employment Agencies?

Temporary agencies that specialize in temporary work in social services generally place social workers to cover for permanent workers who are out sick, on maternity leave, or on vacation. These agencies will also call social workers to fill-in for shifts when regular employers call-in and are unavailable.

What are Job Placement Agencies?

Job Placement Agencies or "head hunters" are professional placement agents hired to find workers to fill particular positions. Generally, the agency fees are paid by the hiring organization. Placement agencies eliminate the administrative busywork and the screening process involved in hiring a new employee. Few social service agencies can afford to hire a recruiter to do this work so they will handle the hiring process themselves. Consequently, there are few agencies in existence.

You should be aware that placement agencies paid by employers to hire a new employee have the agency's interests in mind, and not necessarily yours. You should be careful when using this sort of service that the job offered is really what you want. Ask lots of questions. On the other hand, you should question any agency that asks you to pay for them to find you a job. Beware! You may find they can offer only a handful of opportunities; they cannot meet your needs; and you will be out hundreds of dollars.

Loan Forbearance

For graduates whose student loan deferments are coming to an end and who do not yet have jobs, forbearance agreements are possible for many loans. Forbearance means that you are currently unable to pay the loan but agree to do so as soon as you are able. You can arrange to pay the interest only or you can allow the interest to capitalize and be added to the loan. If you choose to arrange for forbearance, you will be asked to register with an employment agency.

Loan Forgiveness

- [MA Loan Repayment Program for Health Professionals](#)
- [Federally Designated Underserved Areas](#)

Loan forgiveness programs not specific to social workers, but that may still possibly be applicable, can be found at: www.finaid.org/loans/forgiveness.phtml. Programs at this website include [Americorps](#), [Peace Corps](#), and [National Health Service Corps](#), as well as other paths to forgiveness.

Planning Your Job Search

The average job search takes *two-to-three months*. Survey data related to social work job search and employment are [posted here](#).

You should decide when you want to be working and count backward on the calendar. The date you have selected is when you will begin submitting resumes and doing interviews. You may want to plan to schedule informational interviews and do the self-assessment process in the booklet before that date. Practice interviewing and be as prepared as possible before you begin the real thing.

Use the following checklist to help identify job search steps you may have missed.

I have...

- completed the self-assessment process (prioritizing skills, values and interests)
- done informational interviews and begun networking
- written my resume
- used multiple resources to find job listings
- written cover letters and sent resumes to potential employers
- followed up on cover letters and resumes with phone calls
- practiced interviewing and considered responses to the most commonly asked interview questions
- formulated good questions to ask employers
- sent thank you letters to all who interviewed me
- determined my minimum salary requirements and the benefits I need and want
- responded to all offers with letters of decline or acceptance
- used my letter of acceptance to clearly spell out my expectations of salary, benefits, and responsibilities

This page may be *printed* to help you keep track of your status with employers.

Tracking the Job Search Process

Agency: _____

Contact Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Position for which I am applying: _____

Description of position and qualifications: _____

Initial cover letter was sent on: _____

In my cover letter, I indicated that I would call to follow-up by:

I actually called to follow-up on: _____

I ___ was ___ was not granted an interview.

My first interview or round of interviews is/was: _____

I sent a thank you note(s) to:

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

My second interview or round of interviews is/was: _____

I sent a thank you note(s) to:

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

Name: _____ Date sent: _____

I ___ was ___ was not offered the position. If offered, date of offer: _____

I ___ declined ___ accepted the position on: _____

I sent letter of acceptance outlining salary, benefits, and job responsibilities
on: _____ and asked for a written response of any changes

by: _____

Other notes:

We wish you all the best as you begin your meaningful and fulfilling career as a professional social worker!