

# Social Workers Are Everywhere!

In schools, hospitals, mental health facilities and clinics. In fact, there are an estimated

**682,000**

active social workers in the United States. However, their compensation lags.

about  
**110,000**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, social work is one of the fastest-growing professions in the United States, with about **110,000 more social workers** expected to enter the profession in just seven years.

**16%**

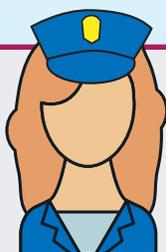


Overall, social work employment is projected **to grow 16%** by 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Although 90 percent of social workers are satisfied with the life-affirming, invaluable work they do, social work salaries lag behind those of other helping professions such as nurses, high school teachers, and police officers.



Median annual wage for registered nurses  
**\$70,000**



Median annual wage for police officers and detectives  
**\$62,960**



Median annual wage for high school teachers  
**\$59,170**



Median annual wage for elementary school teachers  
**\$57,160**



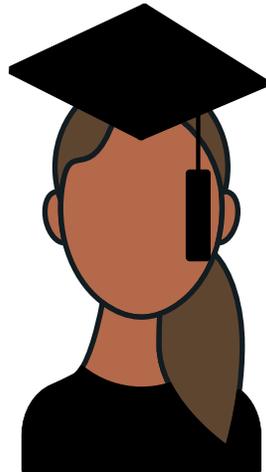
Median annual wage for social workers  
**\$47,980**

**The main educational pathways to working as a social worker are:  
A bachelor's or master's degree**

BSW enrollment:  
**60,306**

MSW enrollment:  
**63,569**

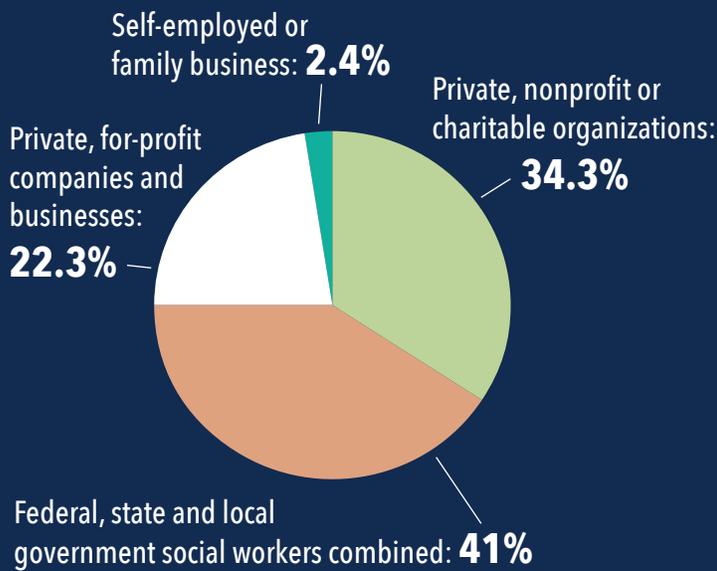
Doctoral enrollment:  
**1,052**



**Types of Jobs Taken by New Social Workers**

	BSW	MSW
Direct work with individuals, families or groups	77.1%	92%
Direct work with communities	12.5%	2.6%
Indirect social work	8.3%	3.7%
Social work higher education	0.0%	0.3%
Other social work positions	0.0%	0.1%
Jobs outside of traditional social work where a social work degree is important.	2.1%	1.3%

**Where Social Workers Are Employed**



**Top Paying Sectors for Social Workers**

In May 2017, the median annual wage for social workers in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Hospitals: state, local, and private	\$58,490
Local government, excluding education and hospitals	\$52,900
Ambulatory health care services	\$48,340
State government, excluding education and hospitals	\$46,120
Individual and family services	\$40,800

**Social Workers' Incomes**

In terms of mean income, those with master's degrees in social work earn about **\$13,000** more than those with bachelor's degrees in social work. Those with doctorate degrees in social work earn some **\$20,000 to \$25,000 more** than MSWs. Although MSWs earn most in large cities or urban clusters, BSWs earn more in medium and small cities.

Sources: CSWE 2017 Statistics on Social Work Education in the United States and Bureau of Labor Statistics; Profile of the Social Work Workforce, The George Washington University and Health Workforce Institute and School of Nursing; New Social Workers: Results of the Nationwide Survey of 2017 Social Work Graduates: The National Social Work Workforce Study.

**\$13,000** more  
with master's degrees

**\$20,000 to  
\$25,000** more  
with doctorate degrees