# FROM SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF 2018 SOCIAL WORK GRADUATES



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*A Report to the*

Council on Social Work Education
and
National Workforce Initiative Steering Committee

*From*

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The views and findings in this report reflect the work of the George Washington University Health Workforce Institute and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council on Social Work Education, the National Workforce Initiative Steering Committee, or the George Washington University.

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# Forward

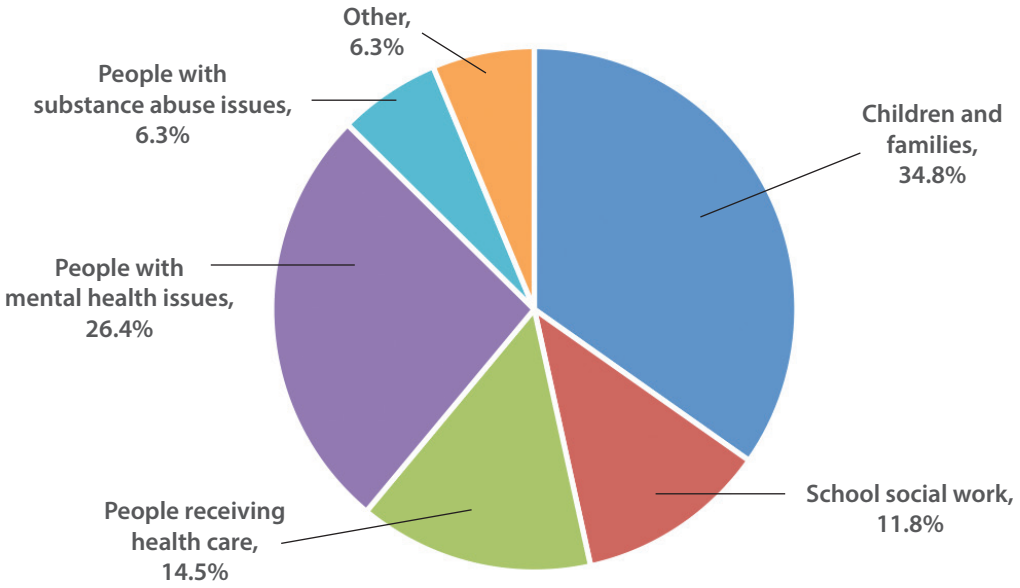
In 2018 the George Washington Health Workforce Institute (GW-HWI), in collaboration with and supported by the social work community, surveyed graduates of MSW and BSW programs across the country for the second year in a row. The purpose of this survey is to better understand the job market for social workers and the demographic background of new social workers, their educational and career pathways, employment outcomes, and job satisfaction. Graduates of more than 100 MSW and BSW programs participated in the 2018 survey. The responses from more than 1,400 MSW and 300 BSW graduates have been weighted to make the results representative of all social work graduates in 2018.

This report presents basic data and key findings from the 2018 survey. A series of briefs presenting results on specific aspects of the 2018 survey will be available in the coming months, including briefs comparing graduates whose education was primarily online to those whose education was in-person, background and outcomes by race and ethnicity of the graduates, and demand indicators for social work jobs by region and concentration.

# Executive Summary: Key Findings

- ***Social workers are employed in a wide variety of settings serving clients with diverse needs.*** Children and families were the focus of more than a third of MSW graduates; more than a quarter were focused on people with mental health issues (see Figure ES-1). More than 30% work for private not-for-profit organizations, 28% work for health-care organizations, and 17% work for government agencies (see Table ES-1). The skills and competencies of MSWs can be applied in many settings.

**Figure ES-1. Groups Served, Main Client Focus of MSWs Working as Social Workers**




Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

## Table ES-1: Employers of MSWs Working as Social Workers

| IN YOUR PRINCIPAL POSITION WHO ARE YOU (OR WILL YOU BE) WORKING FOR? | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|
| Private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt or charitable organization | 31.1 |
| Health care organizations: | 27.9 |
| Outpatient health care services | (16.3) |
| Hospital inpatient facility | (8.9) |
| Nursing or residential care facility | (2.7) |
| State, local or federal government agency | 17.4 |
| Educational establishment outside of higher education | 7.3 |
| Private, for-profit facility or business | 4.6 |
| Private social work practice | 4.6 |
| Other | 7.2 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including those not requiring a social work degree or license.

- ***Most new MSWs are providing direct services to individuals, families, and groups.*** Relatively few (7.8%) are providing indirect social work services, such as public policy (see Table ES-2).

## Table ES-2: Type of Jobs Taken for Those Working as Social Workers

| IN YOUR PRINCIPAL POSITION WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ROLE? | PERCENTAGE (*N*=1,039) |
|---|---|
| Direct work with individuals, families, or groups | 82.1 |
| Direct work with communities | 5.3 |
| Indirect social work[a] | 7.8 |
| Social work higher education | 1.0 |
| Other social work position | 0.6 |
| A position for which you believe a social work education provides relevant preparation | 3.1 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who entered positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

[a]Indirect social work includes public policy and advocacy; administration, management; planning; program evaluation; research (excluding teaching positions); or environmental health or public health work.

- ***More than three-quarters of MSW graduates are entering social work jobs, although not all such jobs require an MSW (see Table ES-3). More than 17% of MSW graduates are going into positions that do not have social work titles but in which they are using their social work education and skills.*** This includes positions such as case worker, project manager, and mental health specialist. These individuals are valuable outputs of schools of social work but may not be counted on government and other surveys as social workers. About 6% of MSW graduates indicated they were entering or had entered positions without a social work title and were not using skills/competencies learned in their social work education. These individuals are at least temporarily out of the social work profession.

## Table ES-3: Social Work Content of MSW Postgraduation Jobs

| WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PRINCIPAL POSITION? | PERCENTAGE (*N*=1,099) |
|---|---|
| A job that requires a social work degree and/or license | 62.3 |
| A job as a social worker not requiring a social work degree or license | 14.2 |
| **Subtotal: Social Work Jobs** | **(76.5)** |
| Working not as a social worker but in a job for which you believe a social work education has provided relevant preparation | 17.6 |
| A job for which a social work education was not a necessary or relevant preparation | 5.9 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of all those with a job, whether they had searched for it or not.

- ***Regardless of setting and employer, MSWs are serving high-need populations.*** More than 70% of MSWs in social work positions indicated that most of their clients had mental health disorders; nearly 70% indicted that more than half their clients were on Medicaid and below the federal poverty level. More than a third indicated that a majority of their clients had a substance abuse disorder. Although the elderly and the seriously ill were not foci for many MSWs, more than a quarter indicated that most of their clients were seriously ill, and nearly as many said a majority of their clients needed assistance with activities of daily living. Finally, more than a third (37.2%) indicated that most of their patients were involved with the child welfare system.

- ***Salaries of new MSWs are relatively low for individuals with a master's degree.*** The median income was only $42,500 for new social workers; the median salary was higher ($47,500) for those going into positions in hospitals, government agencies, and educational institutions. Although most MSWs were satisfied with their new positions (see Table ES-4), more than a quarter (27%) were dissatisfied with their income.

## Table ES-4: MSW Satisfaction With Position and Salary

| | WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH YOUR CURRENT POSITION? | WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH YOUR CURRENT SALARY? |
|---|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 48.7 | 26.9 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 41.4 | 46.5 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 7.8 | 18.6 |
| Very dissatisfied | 2.2 | 8.1 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

- ***The profession is largely female; there are some differences in practice patterns by race and gender.***

Although the backgrounds and practice patterns of MSW graduates were similar regardless of sex or race/ethnicity, there were some interesting differences:

- African American MSWs were more likely to be part-time students than Whites (28.1% vs 21.9%). Compared to White and Hispanic MSWs, African American MSWs were also more likely to have received their instruction primarily online (12.3% and 16.6% vs 21.9%, respectively).
- White MSWs were more likely to practice in hospitals than African Americans (11.7% vs 1.9%, respectively), whereas African Americans were more likely to be employed by government than Whites (21.3% vs 15.7%)
- African American and Hispanic MSWs were far more likely to practice in large cities than Whites (37.7% and 42.4% vs 17.8%, respectively), whereas Whites were more likely to practice in rural and semirural communities than African Americans or Hispanics (18.9% vs. 13.2% and 4.1%, respectively).
- African American MSWs were more likely to have a practice focus on children and families than Whites (41.9% vs 31.9%, respectively), whereas Whites were more likely to be focused on health care and substance abuse than African Americans (14.6% and 6.6% vs. 9.2% and 2.6%, respectively).
- African American and Hispanic MSWs had slightly higher average incomes than Whites ($44,500, $48,750, and $43,750, respectively).
- Female MSW graduates were more likely to have jobs focused on children and families than males (35.7% vs 26.4%). Males, on the other hand, were more likely to have jobs focused on mental and behavioral illness (37.0% vs 26.5%). Because females make up 90% of the graduates, the majority (85%) of new social workers focused on mental/behavioral health are female.
- Although the mean income for male MSWs was higher than that for female MSWs ($47,500 vs $43,750, respectively), the median income was the same at $42,500.

- ***The majority of BSW graduates have plans to pursue a graduate degree in social work: Almost 95% are either currently enrolled or are planning or expecting to enroll in an MSW program in the future. Only 59% of BSWs have jobs after earning their social work degree, and less than half of this group (46%) are employed in a social work position. The job market for BSWs appears to be limited.***

More than half of all BSWs (59.6%) indicated they were already enrolled in an MSW program. Another 18.9% expected to enroll in the next 2 years. Only 5.5% had no plans to enroll.

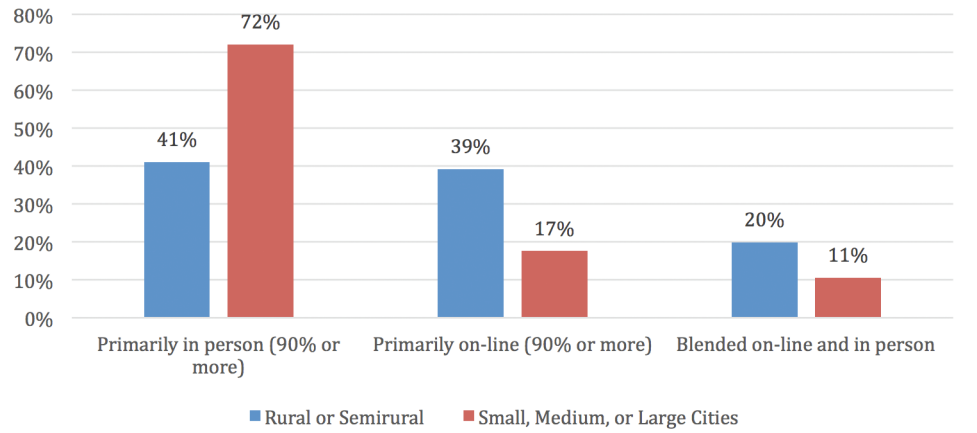
Nearly half (48%) of BSWs who had searched for a job indicated they had a difficult time finding a satisfactory position. Of the BSWs who searched for a job, 25.6% had not been offered any position at the time of the survey. Of those who had found a job, 30.9% were working in jobs for which a social work education was not required or relevant for the position.

- ***Many new social workers, especially MSWs, have several years of prior work experience and are older than entrants into other professions.*** The mean age of MSW graduates in 2018 was 31.3 years, and 23.6% were 36 years old or older. Nearly a third of new MSWs had worked for 6 or more years prior to entering MSW programs.

- ***Online education offers access to educational opportunities in rural and semirural areas and to African Americans.***

Although 17% of all respondents received their instruction primarily online (defined as 90% or more of their nonclinical instruction), 39% of the MSW graduates from rural and semirural areas received their instruction primarily online. Similarly, 22% of African American graduates received their instruction online compared to 16.6% of the White MSW graduates.

**Figure ES-2: Program Delivery for MSWs in Rural and Semirural Areas Compared to those in Small, Medium and Large Cities**

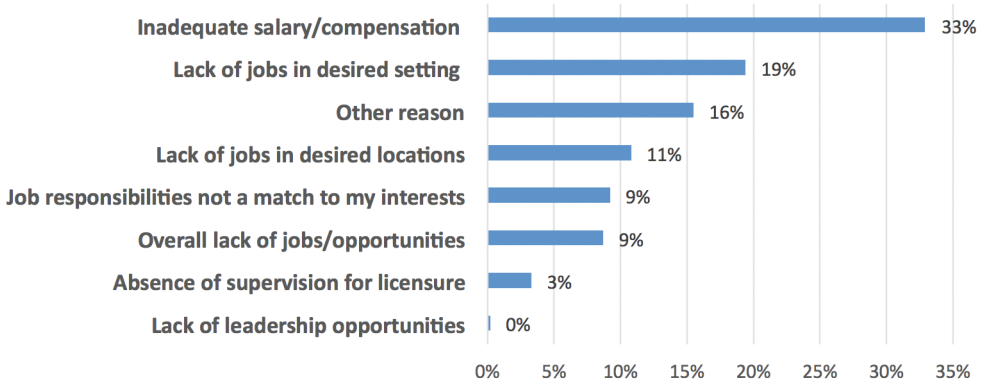



Question asked: "Which best describes the demographics of the principal area in which you are/will be practicing?" Rural or semirural areas="Semirural" or "Rural" area. Small, medium, or large cities="Small city," "Suburb of a large or medium city," "Medium city," or "Large city."

- ***The job market for new MSWs is mixed: There are opportunities, but many are not what the new graduates are looking for and the pay is lower than desired.*** Nearly 50% of MSWs indicate they had a difficult time finding a satisfactory position (see Figure ES-3). The main reasons cited were inadequate compensation (33%), lack of jobs in desired settings (16%), and lack of jobs in desired locations (11%). Only 9% cited an overall lack of jobs. Similarly, when asked to assess the local and national job markets, only 11.7% and 5.4%, indicated "no," "very few," or "few jobs" were available in local and national job market, respectively; and 38.9% and 54.7 indicated there were "many jobs" in local and national job markets, respectively.

The overall job market appears reasonable for MSWs, with only 11.7% reporting finding no, very few, or few jobs locally. A total of 82.6% of MSWs reported finding some or many jobs in their local areas.

**Figure ES-3: Main Reasons for Difficulty Finding a Satisfactory MSW Position**




Note: Percentages are of those who searched and said they had difficulty finding a job they were satisfied with.

- ***More than one of three jobs taken by new graduates were with organizations with which the graduates had field placements during their social work education.***

- ***The majority of new MSWs plan to become licensed clinical social workers.*** Four of five MSWs (80.6%) either planned to become licensed clinical social workers within the next 5 years or were already licensed.

# Method

The 2018 Survey of Social Work Graduates included students graduating with a bachelor of social work (BSW) degree and equivalent degrees such as bachelor of arts in social work and master of social work (MSW) degree and equivalents such as master of social service, master of science in social administration, or master of science in social work. The survey, conducted in early fall to allow time for spring graduates to have searched for employment, captured students graduating between January and August 2018. All accredited social work programs in the United States were invited to participate in the survey; 53 MSW and 49 BSW programs agreed to participate.

The survey used REDCap survey software (Harris et al., 2009), which can establish a unique survey link for each participant via e-mail to prevent duplicate responses and enable the sending of survey reminders only to those who have not yet responded. A few schools provided GW HWI with e-mail addresses from their records. However, in most instances student e-mail addresses were obtained when schools forwarded invitations with a REDCap Web link to students in May, June, or July 2018 that enabled interested students to sign up for the survey in advance and provide an e-mail address that would be valid when the survey went live in late August. To encourage student participation, a $20 gift card was offered for the first 1,100 MSWs and 400 BSWs to complete the survey.

Lists of survey registrants were sent to schools to confirm graduation status. REDCap was then used to conduct the survey via unique Web links e-mailed to each of almost 2,500 confirmed registrants. The survey launched at the end of August 2018 and closed after 4 weeks with 1,780 responses.

Data cleaning and exclusion of individuals who did not enter degree program information reduced the final figure to 1,716 valid responses, for a response rate of 68.9% of those who registered. This includes 1,405 valid responses from MSWs and 311 from BSWs.

**Table 1: Overall Responses and Response Rates**

| DEGREE AWARDED | NUMBER ACCEPTING INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE | NUMBER OF VALID RESPONSES | PROGRAMS | RESPONSE RATE BY DEGREE[a] (%) | RESPONSE RATE AMONG PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS[b] (%) | PROPORTION OF NATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EACH DEGREE[c] (%) | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS IN WEIGHTED ANALYSIS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BSWs | 474 | 311 | 46 | 65.6 | 15.3 | 1.4 | 289 |
| MSWs | 2,022 | 1,405 | 53 | 69.5 | 15.4 | 5.0 | 1,317 |
| **Total** | **2,496** | **1,716** | **99** | **68.8** | **15.4** | **N/A** | **1,606** |

Note: N/A=not applicable.

[a] Response rate reflects the percentage of individuals who signed up in May-July who responded.

[b] Response reflects total respondents as a percentage of total graduates of participating schools according to CSWE data on number of graduates in 2017.

[c] Based on number of respondents by degree type as a percentage of all graduates nationally as reported by CSWE.

As indicated in Table 1, the valid responses represent 15.4% of all graduates of the social work programs who participated in the survey. Further, the MSW respondents represented an estimated 5% of all MSW graduates nationally; the BSWs represented 1.4% of all BSW graduates nationally. To make the results reflect the actual 2018 graduates of social work programs, the responses were weighted using four variables. Poststratification weights are constructed by calculating the ratio of the population proportion of the weighting variable and the sample proportion of the weighting variable. The sample proportion comes from the 2018 Survey of Social Work Graduates, and the population proportion is derived from the 2017 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) social work program survey (CSWE, 2018). Multiple characteristics were used to balance with the overall population:

1. **Auspice:** the institutional auspice or sponsorship (e.g., private school vs public school) of the college or university containing the respondent's social work program
2. **Region:** the region where the social work program presides (e.g., Mid-Atlantic region, West Coast region)
3. **Race:** respondent's race (e.g., African American, White, Asian)
4. **Ethnicity:** whether respondent was Hispanic/Latino

Additional details on the weighting methodology are provided in Appendix 1. Results presented in the report are based on a weighted analysis unless otherwise stated.

# Demographics of Respondents

Percentages and means given in the remainder of this report use weighted data unless otherwise noted.

### Sex

As would be expected, graduates of either degree type were overwhelming female (90.9% of MSWs and 90.3% of BSWs) (see Table 2). In 2015, according to the American Community Survey, 85% of the active social workers with master's degrees or above were female. Based on the 2018 Survey of Social Work Graduates, that percentage is likely to increase.

**Table 2: Birth Sex of Respondents**

| Birth Sex | BSW Percentage | MSW Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 90.3 | 90.9 |
| Male | 9.7 | 8.4 |
| Decline to answer | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

## Age

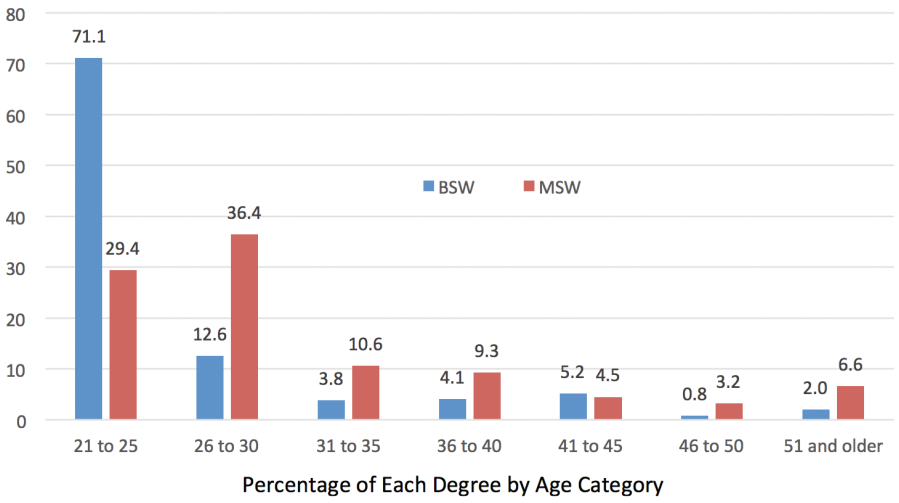
Graduating BSWs were generally younger than MSW graduates (see Table 3 and Figure 1). On average, BSW graduates were 5 years younger than MSWs. Both degree types had lower mean than median ages, indicating skewed distributions, with some respondents substantially older than the mean age. More than 71% of BSW graduates were 21–25 years old, compared to fewer than 30% of the MSWs. Almost a quarter (23.6%) of MSWs were more than 35 years old, compared to 12.1% of the BSWs. Clearly, many of the MSWs graduated with extensive life experience.

**Table 3: Mean and Median Age of Respondents by Degree**

| Degree Awarded | Mean Age | Median Age[a] |
|---|---|---|
| BSW | 26.3 | 23 |
| MSW | 31.3 | 28 |

[a] Unweighted

**Figure 1: Age Groups of Respondents, BSWs and MSW**




## Race and Ethnicity

Unlike many health professions, African Americans are well represented among social work graduates: 22.9% and 25.7% of MSWs and BSWs, respectively (see Table 4). This compares to 11.6% of the U.S. working population being African American (National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2017). Two thirds of respondents (66.0% of MSWs and 65.2% of BSWs) were White.

**Table 4: Race of Respondents**

| Race | BSW (%) | MSW (%) |
|---|---|---|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 3.0 | 5.0 |
| African American | 25.7 | 22.9 |
| White | 65.2 | 66.0 |
| Other race | 0.7 | 1.0 |
| More than one race | 3.5 | 2.8 |
| Decline to answer | 0.8 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

The proportions of respondents who identified with Hispanic origin were also higher than in most health professions (see Table 5) and very close to the 16.1% of the Hispanic working population in the United States in 2011–2015 (National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2017).

**Table 5: Ethnicity of Respondents**

| Are you Hispanic/Latino? | BSW (%) | MSW (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 16.7 | 14.4 |
| No | 83.3 | 85.6 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

### Sexual Orientation

More than 80% of respondents identified as straight or heterosexual in either degree category. Very few respondents declined to answer this question (1.2% of MSWs, 1.0% of BSWs), whereas just under 3% identified as "something else" (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Sexual Orientation of Respondents**

| Do you think of yourself as … | BSW (%) | MSW (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Straight or heterosexual | 82.4 | 85.9 |
| Lesbian, gay, or homosexual | 1.5 | 3.4 |
| Bisexual | 12.8 | 6.7 |
| Something else | 2.4 | 2.8 |
| Decline to answer | 1.0 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

### Language Fluency

Approximately one in five respondents (20.2% of MSWs, 17.5% of BSWs) reported being fluent in a language other than English (see Table 7). Not surprisingly, Hispanic/Latino respondents were far more likely than non-Hispanics (see Table 8) to be fluent in a language other than English (61.8% vs 13.2% among MSWs, $p<.001$).

**Table 7: Fluency in Other Languages**

| Are you fluent in a language other than English? | BSW (%) | MSW (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 17.5 | 20.2 |
| No | 82.5 | 79.8 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

**Table 8: Fluency in Other Languages, by Ethnicity (MSWs only)**

| Are you fluent in a language other than English? | Non-Hispanic/Latino | Hispanic/Latino |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 13.2 | 61.8 |
| No | 86.8 | 38.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

# Findings: MSWs

## Overview of Data

Several denominators are used in the tables and figures in this report depending on the nature and purpose of the questions asked. When the denominator is not all respondents to the survey, this is indicated in the relevant table. To aid clarity, however, a summary of the various denominators used in deriving percentages is provided in Table 9. There is also some small additional variation in denominators question-by-question depending on whether all respondents gave an answer to each question they were asked.

**Table 9: Overview of Data**

| | BSW | MSW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| All respondents | 311 | 1,405 | 1,716 |
| Respondents in weighted analysis | 289 | 1,317 | 1,606 |
| Those who searched for a job | 169 | 1,138 | 1,307 |
| Those who accepted a job offer after searching | 78 | 787 | 865 |
| Those working in any job (whether they searched for it or not) | 173 | 1,099 | 1,272 |
| Those working in a social work job (whether they searched for it or not) | 83 | 867 | 950 |

The following sections provide data on those graduating with an MSW or equivalent degree.

# MSW Education and Experience

### Experience/Education Prior to Beginning a Social Work Degree Program

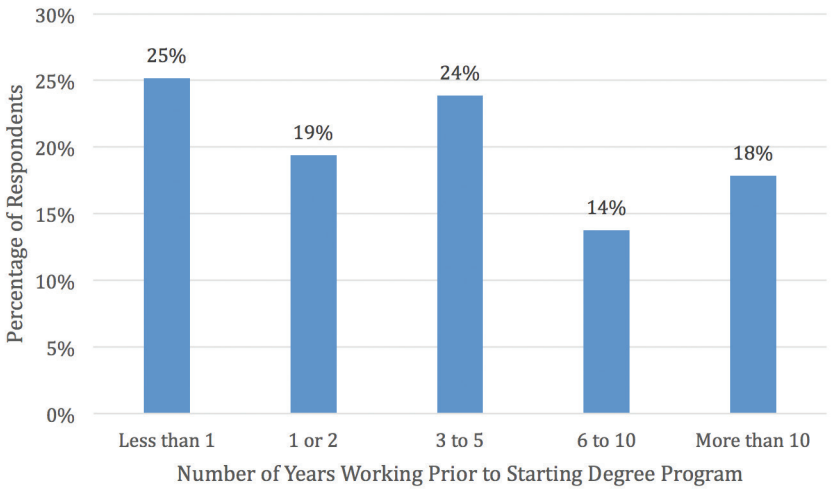
Two thirds of the MSWs (66.0%) reported having a prior degree in something other than social work. This implies that at least a third entered MSW programs with BSW degrees (see Table 10).

**Table 10: Non–Social Work Prior Degree Held**

| Besides your social work degree(s), do you hold any other (non–social work) degrees? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes | 66.1 |
| No | 33.9 |
| Total | 100 |

An important aspect of those receiving an MSW degree is that many are more experienced than those entering other professions. Figure 2 shows that nearly 32% of new MSW graduates have 6 or more years of experience. This is consistent with the large cohort of MSW graduates older than age 35.

**Figure 2: Working Prior to Beginning an MSW Degree Program**




## Social Work Education

The majority of graduating MSWs (80.2%) were enrolled full-time throughout their MSW education. However, there were variations by race. Five of six whites (83.3%) were enrolled full-time throughout their MSW education, compared to 71.9% of African Americans (see Table 11).

**Table 11: Full Time MSW Study by Race**

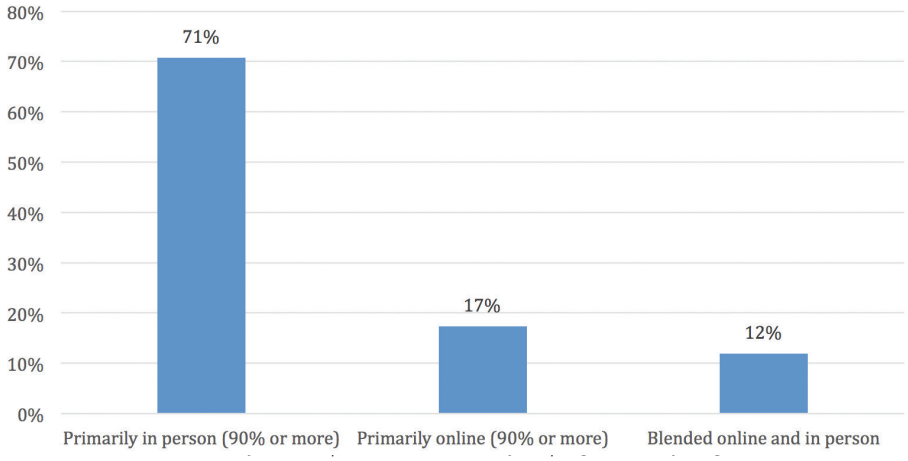
| Full-Time Student | Asian or Pacific Islander (%) | African American (%) | White (%) | Other Race (%) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 74.3 | 71.9 | 83.3 | 89.9 | 80.3 |
| No | 25.7 | 28.1 | 16.7 | 10.1 | 19.7 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

## Type of Instruction

Although most MSW graduates (70.7%) received their social work education primarily through in-person instruction (defined as receiving more than 90% of their nonclinical MSW education in person), more than 17% received more than 90% of their instruction online. An additional 11.9% indicated they had a mix of online and in-person instruction (see Figure 3).

It is noteworthy that African Americans were more likely to receive most of their education online than Whites: 21.9% compared to 16.6% (see Table 12).

## Figure 3: Online and In-Person MSW Instruction




## Table 12: Online and In-Person MSW Study by Race

| Other than your field placements, how was your program mainly taught? | Primarily in Person (%) | Primarily Online (%) | Blended Online and in Person | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 57.1 | 18.9 | 24.0 | 100 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 78.8 | 13.6 | 7.7 | 100 |
| African American | 70.2 | 21.9 | 7.9 | 100 |
| White | 70.2 | 16.6 | 13.2 | 100 |
| **Total for All Respondents** | **70.8** | **17.6** | **11.6** | **100** |

Note: Excludes those responding "more than on," "other," or "decline to respond." "Primarily" is understood to mean 90% or more.

As noted in Table 11, nearly 20% of graduates attended MSW programs part-time. Almost three quarters of the MSW graduates (72.2%) completed programs within 3 years. However, Table 13 shows that only 68.4% of the part-time African Americans and only 45.1% of the part-time Asian and Pacific Islanders completed within 3 years compared to 79.0% of part-time Whites ($p<.05$ for Asian and Pacific Islanders vs all others; other differences not statistically significant).

**Table 13: Time Taken by Part-Time Students to Complete MSW Degree, by Race**

| How many years did it take you to earn your degree? | Asian or Pacific Islander (%) | African American (%) | White (%) | Other (%) | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 year or less | 0.0 | 1.3 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| More than 1 but not more than 2 years | 0.0 | 15.4 | 17.2 | 5.0 | 14.5 |
| More than 2 but not more than 3 years | 45.1 | 51.7 | 61.5 | 51.9 | 57.6 |
| More than 3 but not more than 4 years | 38.7 | 28.6 | 19.0 | 33.5 | 24.0 |
| More than 4 but not more than 5 years | 0.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 2.1 |
| More than 5 years | 16.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 9.6 | 1.2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Note: Percentages are of those who said they had taken their degree part-time.

Those taking degrees primarily online were more likely than others to complete them in less than 2 years (22.0% vs 11.2% to 12.0%); see Table 14. Those taking their degrees in person part-time were least likely to have completed them within 3 years (69.2% vs 76.9% of those studying primarily online and 77.2% of those studying in blended online and in-person mode); see Table 14.

**Table 14: Time Taken by Part-Time MSWs to Complete Degree, by Program Delivery Mode**

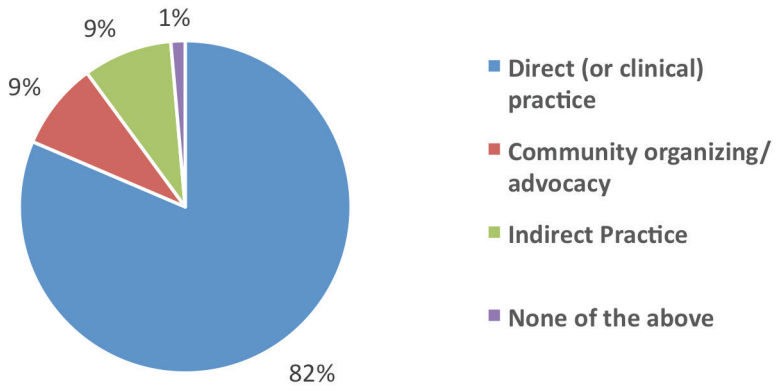
| How many years did it take you to earn your degree? | Primarily In Person (%) | Primarily Online (%) | Blended Online and in Person (%) | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 year or less | 0.7 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.6 |
| More than 1 but not more than 2 years | 11.2 | 22.0 | 12.1 | 14.6 |
| More than 2 but not more than 3 years | 57.2 | 55.0 | 63.9 | 57.6 |
| More than 3 but not more than 4 years | 25.5 | 22.6 | 21.3 | 24.0 |
| More than 4 but not more than 5 years | 3.5 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 2.1 |
| More than 5 years | 1.8 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

Note: "Primarily" defined as 90% or more.

### Focus of MSW Education

Participants were asked about the general focus of their programs, followed by a more detailed question about specialization. More than eight of 10 MSWs (81.5%) reported that their educational program's general practice focus was on direct or clinical practice. Community organizing or advocacy was a much less common focus (8.5%), and a focus on indirect practice was at roughly the same level (8.7%), as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: General Focus of MSW Educational Program**




The most common program concentration for MSWs was mental health/behavioral health (35.9%), followed by work with children, youths, and families (25.5%), and generalist practice (14.3%). Women were more likely than men to have a concentration in children, youths, and families (26.4% vs 16.6%, $p$=.01) or in generalist practice (15.1% vs 5.2%, $p$<.01), whereas men were far more likely to go into mental/behavioral health (34.0% vs 56.3%, $p$<.01) or substance abuse services. Hispanic respondents were less likely than non-Hispanics to have a concentration in generalist practice (9.8% vs 16.1%, $p$<.05); see Table 15.

Although a higher percentage of male than female MSW graduates go into behavioral health (56.3% vs 34%), women make up about 90% of the social work graduates and, numerically, women social workers are the majority of new social workers going into behavioral health. For example, in the weighted sample we would expect 369 new female MSWs to have an educational focus on mental/behavioral health compared to 59 male MSW graduates. Hence, about 85% of the new social workers graduating with a concentration in mental/behavioral health would be women.

## Table 15: Educational Concentration if in Direct Social Work (MSWs Only)

| Which of the following best describes your concentration in this program? | Female (%) (*n*=1,086)[a] | Male (%) (*n*=105)[a] | All Respondents (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mental Health/Behavioral Health | 34.0 | 56.3 | 35.9 |
| Children/Youths/Families | 26.5 | 16.6 | 25.5 |
| Generalist Practice | 15.1 | 5.2 | 14.3 |
| Health | 6.5 | 1.6 | 6.3 |
| Aging | 4.1 | 4.3 | 4.1 |
| Military | 1.4 | 3.3 | 1.5 |
| Substance Abuse | 0.9 | 6.0 | 1.3 |
| Criminal Justice | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| International | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| Immigrants | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Other | 10.0 | 6.6 | 9.7 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

[a] Because this is a weighted analysis, n refers only to the total number of respondents in the underlying data group and cannot be used to calculate the number of survey respondents in each category. This is always the case for n in this report.

### Financial Support for MSW Education

More than a third (37.8%) of MSWs self-financed their degree program. A little less than a third (30.5% of all respondents) received school-based scholarships, whereas 16.5% received support from their employers, and 11.2% benefited from work-study programs (see Table 16).

## Table 16: Financial Support Received During Degree Program

| Source of Support | Percentage |
|---|---|
| None | 37.8 |
| School-based Scholarship | 30.5 |
| Employer | 16.5 |
| Work/study | 11.2 |
| HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Grant | 3.5 |
| Department of Defense Funds (GI Bill) | 2.8 |
| Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend | 2.3 |
| Department of Veterans Affairs | 2.0 |
| Minority Fellowship Program | 0.6 |
| HRSA Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students | 0.4 |
| Social Work HEALS Scholarship (Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholar) | 0.2 |
| Other Child Welfare Scholarship/fellowship | 1.5 |
| Other Financial Support | 18.6 |

Note: HRSA=Health Resources and Services Administration; HEALS=Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholar.

# MSW Job Search

Some 85.8% of MSW graduates reported searching for a job as they graduated (see Table 17). The principal reason for not searching for a job was already having a job and not needing to search (52.8% of nonsearchers). An additional 18.0% reported they had been offered a job without searching (see Table 18).

That most graduates had searched for a job at the time of the survey in September confirms that September is a reasonable time to conduct the survey to learn about the experience of graduates in the job market.

**Table 17: Whether MSWs Searched for a Job**

| Did you search for a job before (or since) graduating this year? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes | 85.8 |
| No | 14.2 |
| **Total** | **100** |

## Table 18: Why MSWs Had Not Searched for a Job

| Why have you not searched for a job? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I've gone back to school. | 9.0 |
| I already had a job while I was at school, and I am staying in it for the present. | 52.8 |
| I was offered a job without needing to search for one. | 18.0 |
| I'm taking a break from work. | 3.0 |
| Other | 17.2 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who did not search for a job.

Two thirds of the MSWs (66.4%) who searched for a job had accepted a social work job offer. A further 11.6% of those who had searched had been offered a social work job but had not yet accepted (see Table 19).

## Table 19: Job Search Success for Those Who Searched for a Job

| Have you been (or were you) offered a social work-related position? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes, and I accepted the offer. | 66.4 |
| Yes, but I am still searching. | 11.6 |
| **Subtotal: Received a social work job offer** | **(78.0)** |
| No. I have an offer of a non-social work-related position but am still searching for a social work one. | 3.0 |
| No, I have an offer of a non-social work-related position and have accepted it. | 1.9 |
| No, I have not yet been offered any position. | 17.1 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who searched for a job.

The location of a social worker's field placements during his or her education is a major factor in determining the first job after completion of an MSW. More than a third of MSWs (35.6%) were taking jobs with organizations with which they had field placements during their recent degree programs (see Table 20).

## Table 20: Whether Obtained a Job Through Field Placement

| Is this job with an organization with which you had a recent field placement? | Percentage (*n*=1,093) |
|---|---|
| Yes | 35.6 |
| No | 64.4 |
| **Total** | **100.0** |

Note: Percentage of all respondents. Question asked: "Is this job with an organization where you had a field placement as part of your most recent social work degree program?"

An overlapping factor influencing MSWs' first job after earning their degree is previous work experience. Almost a third of MSWs (30.9%) were going to jobs with organizations with which they had worked before or during their recent degree programs (see Table 21).

**Table 21: Whether Returning to a Job in a Prior Organization Following an MSW Degree**

| Did you return to this organization after graduating? | Percentage (*n*=1,071) |
|---|---|
| Yes | 30.9 |
| No | 69.1 |
| **Total** | **100.0** |

Note: This percentage is for all respondents including those who had not searched but did have a job. Question asked: "Is this job with an organization you were employed by before (or during) your most recent social work degree program?"

### Jobs MSWs Are Entering

An important goal of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the types of jobs social workers are entering. This section presents data on the jobs that the 2018 graduates were entering, including those who had searched for a position and those who had not, such as a social worker who returned to a former employer or to an employer with which he or she had an internship.

More than three of four MSWs took jobs requiring a social work degree or license or that were defined as a social work job by the respondent (76.5%), and approximately one in six MSWs (17.6%) had taken a job that was not in social work but for which a social work education had been relevant preparation. The remaining 5.9% of MSWs had taken jobs for which a social work education was not necessary or relevant, and the graduate can be considered lost to social work, at least temporarily (see Table 22).

**Table 22: Social Work Content of MSW Postgraduation Jobs**

| Which of the following best describes your principal position? | Percentage (*n*=1,099) |
|---|---|
| A job that requires a social work degree and/or license | 62.3 |
| A job as a social worker not requiring a social work degree or license | 14.2 |
| Subtotal: Social Work Jobs | (76.5) |
| Working not as a social worker but in a job for which you believe a social work education has provided relevant preparation | 17.6 |
| A job for which a social work education was not a necessary or relevant preparation | 5.9 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of all those with a job, whether they had searched for it or not.

One of the challenges for counting and studying the social work profession is the wide variety of positions and titles that social work graduates may enter after graduation (see Figure 5). A not insignificant percentage (17.6%) of MSW graduates indicated they were not working in a job with a social worker title or for which an MSW was required but were in jobs for which their social work education provided relevant preparation. Although many of the jobs reported in this category can be entered from a variety of educational backgrounds, social work education would seem to be a relevant and valuable preparation for these jobs.

**Figure 5: Social Work Related Jobs Taken by MSW Graduates**

Caseworker/Care Coordinator/Manager

- Case Worker
- Care Coordinator
- Care/Case Manager
- Clinical Care Coordinator
- Mental Health Specialist/Counselor

Program Coordination/Project Management

- Program Coordinator/Manager
- Director of Program Events
- Intergenerational Program Coordinator
- Program Analyst

Academic/Education

- Researcher/Research Assistant
- Student Support
- School Coordinator
- Teacher/Assistant, including Special Ed
- School Counselor

Other job titles

- Adoption and Foster Recruitment Supervisor
- Advocate
- Chemical Dependency Counselor
- Family Liaison
- Forensic Interviewer

Most of the MSWs (82.1%) were working in direct work with individuals, families, or groups. A much smaller number of MSWs were working in indirect social work (7.8%) or direct work with communities (5.3%); see Table 23.

## Table 23: Type of Job Taken for Those Working as Social Workers

| In your principal position what best describes your role? | Percentage (*n*=1,039) |
|---|---|
| Direct work with individuals, families or groups | 82.1 |
| Direct work with communities | 5.3 |
| Indirect social work[a] | 7.8 |
| Social work higher education | 1.0 |
| Other social work position | 0.6 |
| A position for which you believe a social work education provides relevant preparation | 3.1 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Includes individuals who entered positions except those entering positions where social work education was not relevant (See Table 22).

[a] Indirect social work includes public policy and advocacy; administration, management; planning; program evaluation; research, excluding teaching positions; and environmental health or public health work.

Of those working as social workers, three-quarters of the MSWs (75.7%) had taken a job requiring either a social work license or at least an MSW (see Table 24).

## Table 24: Job Educational or Licensing Requirement for Those Working as Social Workers

| Minimum educational or licensing requirement for your current principal position | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Social work license | 41.4 |
| MSW, but not license | 34.3 |
| BSW | 7.6 |
| Any bachelor's degree | 11.2 |
| High school diploma | 1.0 |
| Other | 4.6 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

One quarter of MSWs were working in health settings, with 16.3% serving in outpatient health services and 8.8% in inpatient facilities. A further 31.1% were serving in private or not-for-profit organizations not captured by the questionnaire preceding, and 17.4% were working in state, local, or federal agencies. Almost all of those working in government jobs were in state (58.9%) or local (38.2%) rather than federal government positions (see Table 25).

## Table 25: Practice Settings for MSWs Working as Social Workers

| In your principal position who are you (or will you be) working for? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Outpatient health-care services | 16.3 |
| Hospital inpatient facility | 8.9 |
| Educational establishment outside higher education | 7.3 |
| Private social work practice | 4.6 |
| Nursing or residential care facility | 2.7 |
| Private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt, or charitable organization | 31.1 |
| State, local, or federal government agency | 17.4 |
| Private for-profit facility or business | 4.6 |
| Other | 7.2 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including those not requiring a social work degree or license.

There were some interesting differences by race (see Table 26). More than one in five African American MSWs (21.3%) were working for government agencies compared to only 15.7% of White MSWs ($p<.05$ for Whites vs all others). Conversely, fewer than one in five African American MSWs (18.6%) reported working in inpatient or outpatient health-care facilities, compared to 28.0% of White MSWs ($p<.001$ for Whites vs all others). The difference in health-care work was entirely a result of differences in working in inpatient facilities (1.9% of African Americans vs 11.7% of White MSWs, $p<.001$ for African Americans vs all others and for Whites vs all others).

## Table 26: Practice Settings for MSWs Working as Social Workers, by Race

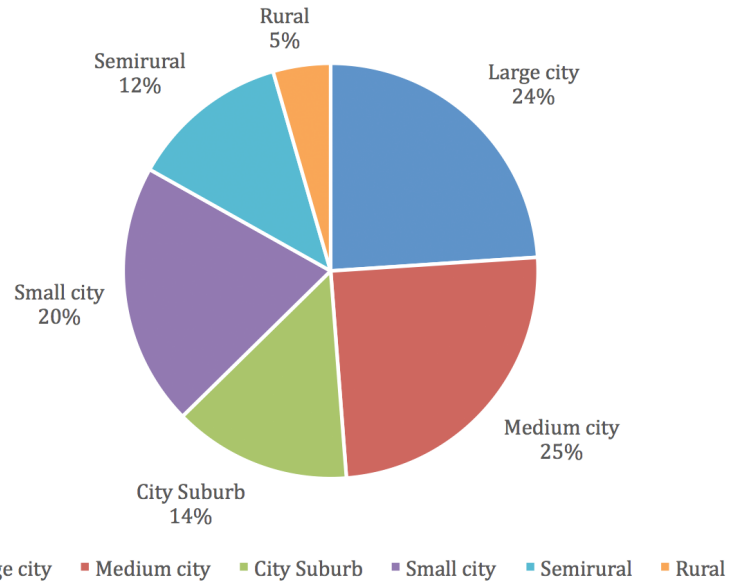
| In your principal position who are you (or will you be) working for? | Asian or Pacific Islander | African American | White | Total[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Private social work practice | 0.0 | 2.9 | 5.3 | 4.7 |
| Educational establishment outside higher education | 0.0 | 7.7 | 7.5 | 7.0 |
| An organization that primarily does research and evaluation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| Hospital inpatient facility | 4.6 | 1.9 | 11.7 | 9.0 |
| Outpatient health-care services | 14.0 | 16.8 | 16.3 | 16.4 |
| Nursing or residential care facility | 2.6 | 3.6 | 2.5 | 2.7 |
| State, local, or federal government agency | 20.0 | 21.3 | 15.7 | 16.8 |
| Private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt, or charitable organization | 45.6 | 31.0 | 30.5 | 31.2 |
| Private, for-profit facility or business | 7.2 | 6.7 | 4.1 | 4.7 |
| Any other employer not described above | 6.0 | 8.0 | 6.3 | 7.3 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

[a] Total includes other categories of race not listed. Total percentages in this table are slightly different from those in Table 25 because this table excludes those who declined to state their race.

MSWs were evenly spread among large, medium, and small cities, with fewer working in suburbs and only about one in six (16.9%) serving in semirural or rural areas (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Density of Area of Practice of Those Working as Social Workers**




Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

Two of five African American MSWs (39.1%) and almost a third of Asian/Pacific Islanders (30.8%, $p<.01$ for African Americans vs all others) were working in large cities compared to fewer than one in five Whites (18.2%, $p<.001$ for Whites vs all others); see Table 27.

## Table 27: Density of Area of Practice of MSWs Working as Social Workers, by Race

| Demographics of the principal area in which you are/will be serving | American Indian/ Alaska Native | Asian or Pacific Islander | African American | White | Total[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Large city (population more than 1 million) | 20.8 | 31.2 | 37.7 | 17.8 | 23.8 |
| Medium city (population more than 250,000 but less than 1 million) | 51.0 | 8.8 | 27.9 | 24.8 | 24.9 |
| Suburb of a large or medium city | 0.0 | 31.1 | 8.4 | 14.6 | 13.8 |
| Small city (population more than 50,000 but less than 250,000) | 9.6 | 16.8 | 12.7 | 23.8 | 20.4 |
| Semirural (population more than 2,500 but less than 50,000) | 2.5 | 12.1 | 9.6 | 13.9 | 12.5 |
| Rural | 16.1 | 0.0 | 3.6 | 5.0 | 4.5 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

a Total includes "more than one," "other," and "declined to answer"; detail not shown.

Hispanics/Latinos were more likely than non-Hispanics to be working in large cities (42.3% vs 21.1%, $p$=.001) and less likely to be working in rural or semirural communities (4.2% vs 18.9%, $p$=.001); see Table 28.

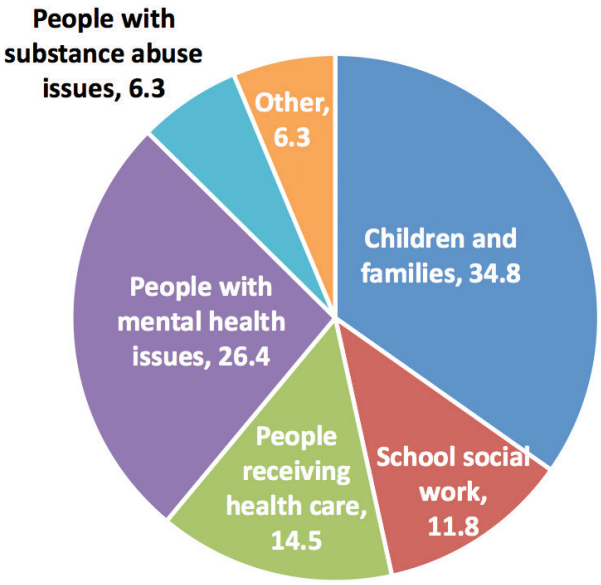
## Table 28: Density of Area of Practice of MSWs Working as Social Workers, by Ethnicity

| Demographics of the principal area in which you are/will be serving | Are you Hispanic/Latino? | |
|---|---|---|
| | No (%) | Yes (%) |
| Large city (population more than 1 million) | 21.1 | 42.3 |
| Medium city (population more than 250,000 but less than 1 million) | 24.8 | 25.2 |
| Suburb of a large or medium city | 14.7 | 8.5 |
| Small city (population more than 50,000 but less than 250,000) | 20.6 | 19.9 |
| Semi-rural (population more than 2,500 but less than 50,000) | 14.0 | 2.2 |
| Rural | 4.9 | 2.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

Another way of looking at what new social workers are doing is to consider the main population group they serve regardless of the setting. The group served by the highest proportion of MSWs was children and families (34.8%), followed by people with mental health issues (26.4%), people receiving health care (14.5%), and school social work (11.8%); see Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Population Groups Served, Main Client Focus of MSWs Working as Social Workers**




Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

White respondents were less likely than Asian or Pacific Islanders and African Americans to be working with children and families (31.9% vs 45.4% and 41.9%, respectively, $p<.05$ for Whites vs all others), but more likely to be working with people receiving health care or with substance abuse issues (14.6% vs 5.2% and 9.2%, $p<.01$ for Asian or Pacific Islanders vs all others, $p<.05$ for Whites vs all others; and 6.6% vs 4.1% and 2.6%, $p<.05$ for Whites vs all others); see Table 29.

**Table 29: Population Served by MSWs: Main Focus by Race**

| Which of the following do you consider to be the main focus of work in your principal job? | Race: Asian or Pacific Islander | African American | White | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children and families | 46.4 | 43.1 | 30.7 | 43.1 | 34.8 |
| School social work | 13.5 | 10.0 | 11.8 | 7.2 | 11.3 |
| People receiving health care | 3.3 | 10.0 | 17.3 | 10.9 | 14.7 |
| People with mental health issues | 29.2 | 26.8 | 26.3 | 24.7 | 26.5 |
| People with substance abuse issues | 0.0 | 3.1 | 8.0 | 4.5 | 6.4 |
| Other | 7.6 | 7.1 | 5.8 | 9.7 | 6.4 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Total percentages in this table are slightly different from those in Table 28 because this table excludes those who declined to state their race.

Hispanics/Latinos were more likely than non-Hispanics to be working with children and families (41.2% vs 33.9%) and less likely to be working with people with mental health issues (23.0% vs 26.9%); neither difference is statistically significant (see Table 30).

**Table 30: Population Served by MSWs: Main Focus by Ethnicity**

| Which of the following do you consider to be the main focus of work in your principal job? | Are you Hispanic/Latino? No (*n*=729) (%) | Yes (*n*=91) (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Children and families | 33.8 | 41.2 |
| School social work | 11.7 | 12.0 |
| People receiving health care | 14.3 | 16.1 |
| People with mental health issues | 26.9 | 23.0 |
| People with substance abuse issues | 6.4 | 5.5 |
| Other | 6.9 | 2.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of all MSWs who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

Consistent with their educational focus, women were more likely to be working with children and families (35.7% vs 26.4%, difference not statistically significant), whereas men were more likely to be working with people with mental health issues (37.0% vs 25.4%, $p<.05$). However, because the proportion of female social workers is far higher than the proportion of males, most social workers working with mental health issues are female (see Table 31).

**Table 31: Population Served by MSWs: Main Focus by Sex**

| Which of the following do you consider to be the main focus of work in your principal practice? | Female (*n*=741) (%) | Male (*n*=77) (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Children and families | 35.7 | 26.4 |
| School social work | 11.7 | 12.1 |
| People receiving health care | 14.6 | 12.3 |
| People with mental health issues | 25.5 | 37.0 |
| People with substance abuse issues | 6.3 | 5.7 |
| More choices | 6.2 | 6.5 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of all MSWs who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

## Work Setting

Work setting is slightly different from population being served: A social worker could be employed by a health organization or a social services agency to provide mental health services. Table 32 presents the settings where social workers say they work. Respondents could indicate more than one setting.

**Table 32: Practice Setting for MSWs Working as Social Workers**

| Employment Setting | Percentage of all Respondents |
|---|---|
| **Children & Families Settings** | |
| Adoption agency | 2.0 |
| Foster care agency | 3.9 |
| Child protection agency | 6.7 |
| Child or child and family welfare agency | 7.6 |
| Family therapy agency | 8.0 |
| **Educational Institutions** | |
| Secondary school | 5.8 |
| Elementary or pre-K school | 8.0 |
| Residential school | 1.2 |
| College/university counseling/health center | 0.8 |
| **Health Settings** | |
| Health insurance or health plan | 0.8 |
| Hospital | 12.1 |
| Home health agency | 1.4 |
| Outpatient facility | 14.2 |
| Physicians' office | 1.0 |
| Community health center or rural health clinic | 4.3 |
| Tribal health clinic | 0.1 |
| Hospice or palliative care facility | 3.7 |
| **Mental & Behavioral Health Settings** | |
| Psychiatric hospital | 3.5 |
| Community mental health center | 13.2 |
| Addiction treatment center (including detox and methadone) | 3.3 |
| Rehabilitation facility | 3.0 |
| Residential treatment center | 5.0 |
| School-based mental health service | 5.1 |
| **Other Settings** | |
| Criminal justice setting (e.g., courts, prisons, parole) | 3.2 |
| Other community-based nonprofit | 17.5 |
| Other | 6.9 |

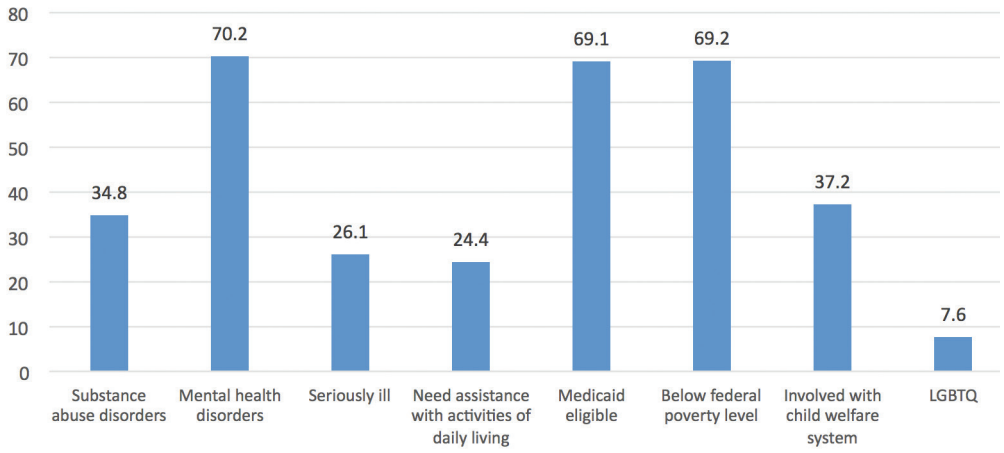
Question asked: "Which of the following describes the primary setting you are working in (or about to work in)"?

## Population Served by MSWs

Figures 8 and 9 describe various characteristics of the clients of new social workers, regardless of work setting or primary focus. Figure 8 indicates the percentage of social workers who reported that more than half their clients could be characterized by their respective needs category; Figure 9 indicates the age groups of clients served.

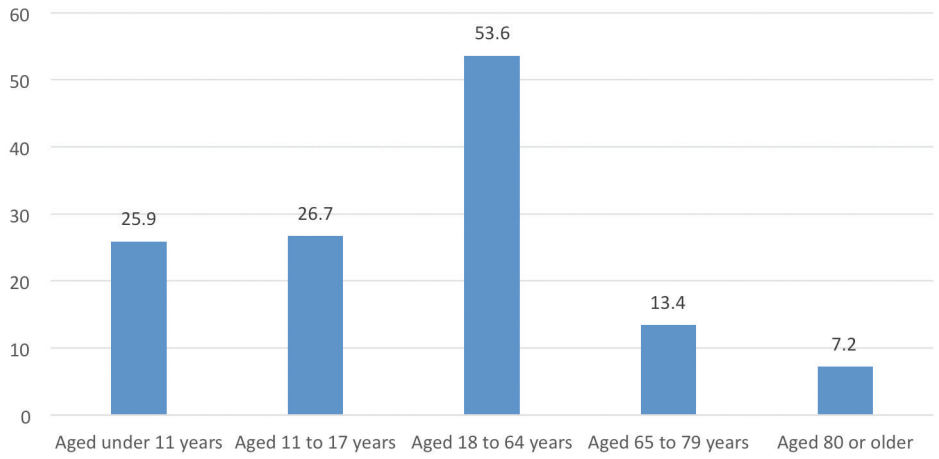
More than two-thirds of MSWs indicated that 50% or more of their clients lived below the poverty level (69.2%), were Medicaid eligible (69.1%), or had mental health disorders (70.2%); see Figure 8. For half the respondents (53.6%), most of their clients were adults in the 18 to 64 years age group, whereas 52.6% of respondents said most of their clients were aged 17 or younger (Figure 9). Only 20.6% reported that most of their clients were aged 65 or older.

**Figure 8: Characteristics of Clients Served: Percentage of Respondents With a Majority of Clients by Needs Category**




Note: Question asked: "Approximately what percent of your current clients (or clients you expect to have in your new position) would fall into each of following categories?" Each question is independent; clients are likely to be reported in multiple categories. Includes only respondents who were actively working as social workers.

## Figure 9. Age Groups Served: Percentage of Respondents With 50% or More Clients by Group




Question asked: "Currently, approximately what percent of your clients (or clients you expect to have) are in each of the following age groups?" Includes only those who were actively working as social workers. Respondents could indicate more than one category representing 50% of their clients; hence, can add to more than 100%.

Of MSWs who were going to be working in indirect social work almost half (44.8%) reported they would be working in administrative positions, and more than a quarter reported they would be working in policy or advocacy (26.8%), with more than one in five working in research (21.4%); see Table 33.

## Table 33: Job Focus for MSWs Whose Main Focus is Indirect Social Work

| What is the main focus of your current position (or the one you are about to start)? | As % of All Entering Indirect Social Work (*n*=31) | As % of All Entering Social Work Jobs (*n*=898) |
|---|---|---|
| Administration | 44.8 | 1.5 |
| Research | 21.4 | 0.7 |
| Policy or advocacy | 26.8 | 0.9 |
| Other | 7.0 | 0.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **3.3** |

Note: Percentages are of MSWs working in indirect social work.

Almost two thirds (65.8%) of MSWs had an immediate supervisor who was a social worker or social work qualified (see Table 34). This figure implies that most graduates are providing social work services in their positions.

## Table 34: Social Work Immediate Supervisor

| Is your immediate supervisor in this position a social worker (or social work qualified)? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes | 65.9 |
| No | 30.9 |
| Don't know | 3.3 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

### Income

MSW males were earning almost $4,000 more than MSW females ($p<.01$). Mean income figures in this section are calculated from midpoints of $5,000 ranges and rounded to the nearest $250. Medians are the midpoint of a $5,000 range.

## Table 35: MSW Income by Sex

| | Females | Males | All Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mean Income | $43,750 | $47,500 | $44,000 |
| Median Income[a] | $42,500 | $42,500 | $42,500 |

Note: Figures are for those working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

[a] Median income is from unweighted analysis.

MSWs were earning most in large cities ($48,250, $p<.001$ for large cities vs all others), but there was little other difference in income by location (range $42,500 to $43,000); see Table 36.

## Table 36: MSW Income by Density of Area of Practice

| Demographics of the Principal Area in Which You Are/Will Be Serving | Mean Income | Median Income[a] |
|---|---|---|
| Large city (population more than 1 million) | $48,250 | $47,500 |
| Medium city (population more than 250,000 but less than 1 million) | $42,500 | $42,500 |
| Suburb of a large or medium city | $42,750 | $42,500 |
| Small city (population more than 50,000 but less than 250,000) | $43,000 | $42,500 |
| Semirural (population more than 2,500 but less than 50,000) | $42,750 | $42,500 |
| Rural | $43,000 | $42,500 |

Note: Figures are for those working in positions as social workers providing direct services, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

[a] Median income is from unweighted data.

Earnings differences between MSWs in differing roles were small, except that those in direct work with communities earned around $7,500 less than any other group ($p<.01$). The mean income for the largest MSW group (direct work with individuals, families, and groups) was around $44,000 (see Table 37).

**Table 37: MSW Income by Role**

| In your principal position what best describes your role? | Mean Income | Median Income[a] |
|---|---|---|
| Direct work with individuals, families, or groups | $44,000 | $42,500 |
| Direct work with communities | $36,500 | $37,500 |
| Indirect social work | $46,500 | $47,500 |
| A position for which you believe a social work education provides relevant preparation | $45,500 | $37,500 |

Note: Figures are for those working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

[a] Median income is from unweighted data.

MSWs were earning most in hospital inpatient facilities, educational establishments outside higher education, government agencies, and outpatient health-care services. They were earning least in private practice (see Table 38).

**Table 38: MSW Income by Type of Employer**

| In your principal position who are you (or will you be) working for? | Mean Income | Median Income[a] |
|---|---|---|
| Private social work practice | $34,750 | $37,500 |
| Educational establishment outside higher education | $45,000 | $47,500 |
| Hospital inpatient facility | $48,000 | $47,500 |
| Outpatient health-care services | $44,750 | $42,500 |
| Nursing or residential care facility | $42,000 | $42,500 |
| Other state, local, or federal government agency | $47,250 | $47,500 |
| Private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt, or charitable organization | $41,750 | $42,500 |
| Private, for-profit facility or business | $42,250 | $42,500 |
| Any other employer not described above | $47,000 | $42,500 |

Note: Figures are for those working in a position as a social worker providing direct services, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

[a] Median income is from unweighted data.

A requirement for a social work degree or license came with an earnings premium of almost $3,000 (not statistically significant); see table 39.

## Table 39: MSW Income by Job Requirement

| Which of the following best describes your principal position? | Mean Income | Median Income[a] |
|---|---|---|
| A job that requires a social work degree and/or license | $44,750 | $42,500 |
| A job as a social worker that does not require a social work degree or license | $42,000 | $42,500 |

Note: Figures are for those working in positions as social workers providing direct services, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

[a] Median income is from unweighted data.

African American male MSWs were earning almost $12,000 a year more than White male MSWs ($p<.01$); see Table 40. Only 16 African American males responded to the survey, so this difference may be driven by a small number of African Americans reporting large salaries, though perhaps also by the higher proportion of African Americans working in well-paid state and local jobs in large cities. There was little difference in average salary between African American and White female MSWs.

## Table 40: Mean Income of MSWs by Sex and Race

| Sex | Mean Income | |
|---|---|---|
| | African American | White |
| Female | $43,250 | $43,750 |
| Male | $56,000 | $44,250 |
| All Respondents | $44,500 | $43,750 |

Note: Figures are for those working in a position as a social worker providing direct services, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

Hispanic/Latino MSWs reported earning more than $5,000 a year more than non-Hispanics ($p=.066$, approaching statistical significance); see Table 41. The difference was greater for males ($12,000) than for females (around $5,000), although with only 12 male Hispanic/Latinos in the sample, the difference was not statistically significant.

## Table 41: Mean Income of MSWs by Sex and Ethnicity

| Sex | Mean Income | |
|---|---|---|
| | Non-Hispanic | Hispanic |
| Female | $43,000 | $48,000 |
| Male | $46,000 | $58,000 |
| All Respondents | $43,500 | $48,750 |

Note: Figures are for those working in positions as social workers providing direct services, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

## The Job Market for New MSWs

The Survey of 2018 Social Work Graduates included a series of questions for those who had searched for a job regarding their difficulty or ease finding a position. The responses to these questions provide a picture of the demand for social workers by education type, region, and setting. Although some of these questions are subjective, such as "Did you have a difficult time finding a job you were satisfied with?", it is possible to compare responses for social workers with different backgrounds and entering jobs in different areas and settings or serving different populations. These questions can be very informative when used over several years, when changes can become apparent.

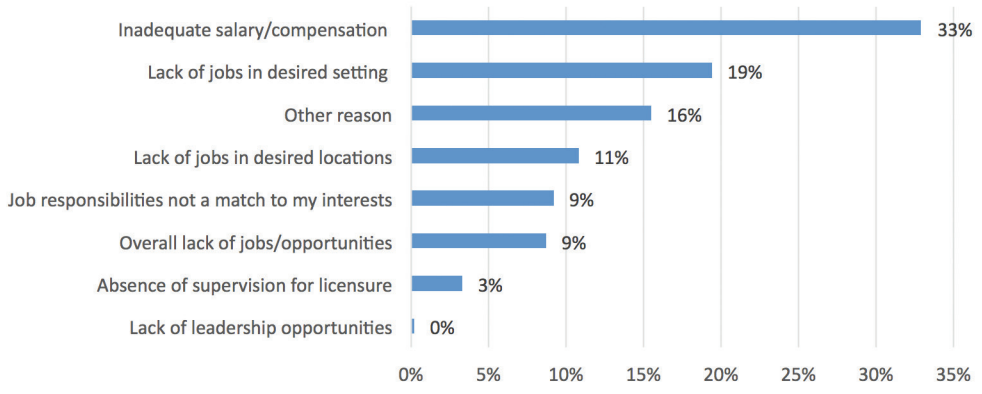
In the 2018 survey almost half the MSWs (48.5%) reported having difficulty finding a position they were satisfied with (see Table 42). The most cited reasons for difficulty were inadequate salary (32.9%) and a lack of jobs/opportunities in desired settings (19.4%). Only 9% cited an overall lack of social work jobs as the main reason for having a difficult time (see Figure 10).

**Table 42: MSW Job Search Difficulty**

| Did you have difficulty finding a position that you were satisfied with? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes | 49.5 |
| No | 50.5 |
| Total | 100 |

Note: Percentages are of those who searched for a job.

**Figure 10. Main Reasons for Difficulty for Those With Difficulty**




Percentages are of those who searched and said they had difficulty finding a job they were satisfied with.

The overall job market appears reasonable for MSWs, with 11.7% reporting finding no, very few, or few jobs locally. However, 82.6% of MSWs reported finding some or many jobs in their local areas. The national job market was better than the local job market: 54.7% of MSWs reported finding many jobs nationally. Just 5.4% reported finding very few, few, or no jobs nationally (see Table 43).

**Table 43: Assessment of National Job Market**

| | Local Job Market (%) | National Job Market (%) |
|---|---|---|
| No jobs | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Very few jobs | 4.2 | 1.5 |
| Few jobs | 7.4 | 3.8 |
| Some jobs | 43.7 | 24.6 |
| Many jobs | 38.9 | 54.7 |
| Unknown | 5.7 | 15.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Note: Question asked: "What is your overall assessment of social work or social work-related jobs/opportunities locally (within 50 miles of where you graduated)?" Percentages are of those who searched for a job.

To help clarify the job market and opportunities for new social workers, the survey included open-ended questions asking for the types of jobs that were more and less available. Most respondents provided responses to these questions, which have been categorized and summarized below.

Almost half of MSWs (48.8%) applied for five or fewer jobs. One third (33.8%) applied for more than 10 jobs (see Table 44).

**Table 44: Job Applications**

| How many social work or social work-related jobs did you apply for (excluding education and training positions)? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| None | 3.1 |
| 1 | 12.8 |
| 2 | 9.8 |
| 3 | 8.3 |
| 4 | 7.3 |
| 5 | 7.5 |
| 6 to 10 | 17.4 |
| More than 10 | 33.8 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who searched for a job.

More than four of five MSWs (80.5%) had received at least one job offer, and 43.2% had received two or more offers (see Table 45).

**Table 45: Job Offers Received**

| How many social work or social work-related job offers did you receive (excluding education and training positions)? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| None | 19.5 |
| 1 | 37.5 |
| 2 | 24.1 |
| 3 | 10.9 |
| 4 | 4.5 |
| 5 | 1.8 |
| 6 to 10 | 1.4 |
| More than 10 | 0.3 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who searched for a job.

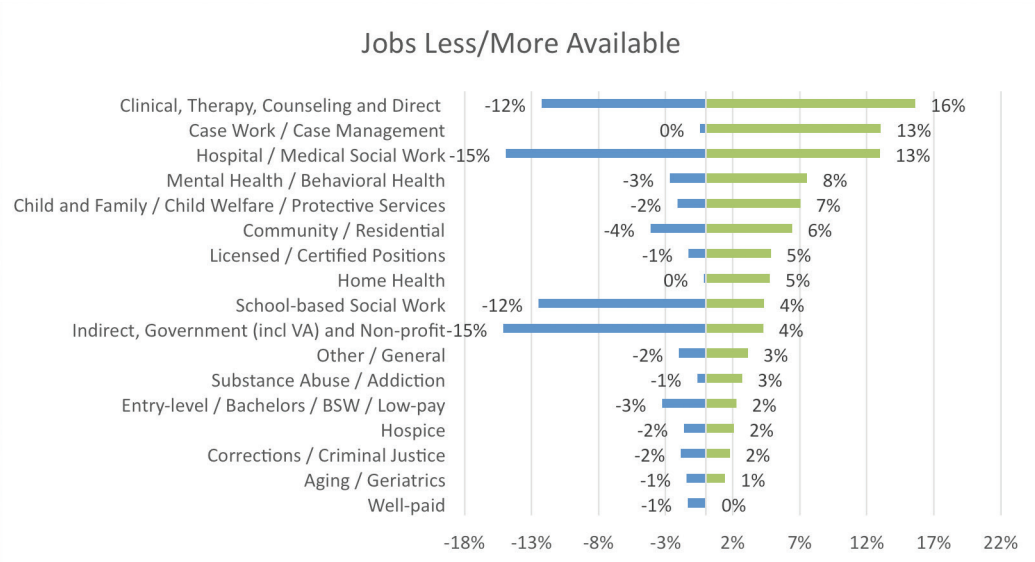
### Jobs More and Less Available

The survey included two open-ended questions: "What types of social work or social work-related positions or settings did you find were more available than others?" and "What types of social work or social work-related positions or settings did you find were less available than others?" The responses to these open-ended questions were coded and categorized. Common work settings and types of jobs were cited by some as being more available and by others as less available. This may reflect variations in the local job market or the backgrounds of the individual respondents.

As seen in Figure 11, the types of positions most frequently cited as more available (and the percentage of those who cited the positions) were Clinical, Therapy, Counseling, and Direct (16%); Case Work/Case Management (13%); Hospital/Medical Social Work (13%); Mental Health/Behavioral Health (8%); and Children and Family, Child Welfare, Protective Services (7%); and Community and Residential (6%).

Among jobs cited as more or less available, the positions with the greatest difference were Case Work/Case Management (+13%); Mental Health/Behavioral Health (+5%); Children and Families, Child Welfare, Protective Service" (+5%); Home Health (+5%); and Licensed/Certified (+4%). Conversely, the positions with the most respondents saying there were few positions compared to those saying there were more positions were Indirect, Government (including the VA), and Nonprofit" (-11%); School-based Social Work (-8%); and Hospital/Medical Social Work (-2%).

**Figure 11. Jobs Less and More Available**




### The Job Market: Differences by Sex

There were some interesting but inconsistent experiences and views of the job market by sex. A slightly higher percentage of men than women reported they had not yet been offered a job (21.0% compared to 19.3%), whereas for those who had difficulty finding a satisfactory job, men were more likely to cite an overall lack of jobs/opportunities than women (17.8% vs 7.4%). Men were more likely than women to report that they had to change their plans (29.7% vs 26.0%), but there was little difference regarding having a difficult time finding a position (both 49.4%). More men than women thought that there were many jobs in the local job market (42.6% vs 38.8%), but fewer men than women thought the same of the national job market (46.0% vs 55.8%). Overall, men and women barely differed as to whether they would recommend the social work profession (90.8% vs 89.8%).

### Satisfaction

The survey included a series of questions on satisfaction. Generally, MSWs were satisfied with their positions, although less so with their salaries. The level of satisfaction undoubtedly contributes to the very high percentage of social workers—almost 90%—who would recommend a social work degree to others (see Table 46).

Nine of 10 MSWs (90.1%) were somewhat or very satisfied overall with their current positions. This is a very strong endorsement for the profession (see Table 46).

**Table 46: Satisfaction With Position**

| What is your overall level of satisfaction with your current position? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 48.7 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 41.4 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 7.8 |
| Very dissatisfied | 2.2 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

Somewhat surprisingly, given how low their average salaries were, most MSWs were at least somewhat satisfied with their salaries, though less so than they were with their positions. More than a quarter of MSWs (26.8%) were very satisfied with their salaries, with 73.3% somewhat or very satisfied (see Table 47).

**Table 47: Satisfaction With Salary**

| What is your level of satisfaction with your current (or expected) social work salary? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 26.9 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 46.5 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 18.6 |
| Very dissatisfied | 8.1 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

Most MSW graduates were satisfied with their job benefits, with 85.0% very or somewhat satisfied (see Table 48).

**Table 48: Satisfaction With Benefits**

| How satisfied are you with the benefits in your principal job? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 53.4 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 31.6 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 8.7 |
| Very dissatisfied | 6.3 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Note: Percentages are of those who were working in positions as social workers, including positions not requiring a social work degree or license.

## MSWs' Views of the Profession

More than 90% of MSWs said they would recommend a social work degree to others (see Table 49). The survey also included open-ended questions about why respondents would or would not recommend the profession. The most frequent reasons given for recommending a social work degree are listed below along with actual comments of respondents. Following are the most frequently cited reasons:

- Flexibility in job opportunities
- Good knowledge base
- Social justice orientation
- Promotes self-growth

The most frequent reasons given for not recommending a social work degree were as follow:

- Terrible pay
- Low prestige (especially in nonclinical jobs)
- Difficulty finding jobs or too few jobs
- Lack of entry-level job opportunities

**Table 49: Views of the Profession**

| Would you recommend a social work degree to others? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes | 90.6 |
| No | 9.4 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Following are examples of comments from survey respondents about why they would recommend a social work degree to others.

- Flexibility in job opportunities
  - "A social work degree is so versatile and can be used in a variety of settings. It is a great choice for individuals who are looking to work directly with people or who want to make changes or an impact in different settings." (MSW)
  - "A social work degree allows flexibility. If I want to work with kids, adults, elderly, in a hospital, school, as a private therapist, or anywhere else, I can. I will never be out of a job and I will never be bored because I can always switch populations or agencies. Aside from that, there are tons of social challenges that I learned about in school and I genuinely agree that every single graduate should take a few social work courses to increase their empathy and knowledge of social issues and vulnerable populations." (BSW)
  - "A degree in social work allows you to apply for licensure at any level and begin your work helping others much sooner. With each level that you are able to attain, you are offered more opportunities to help." (MSW)
  - "A social work degree gives you the credibility and flexibility to help others in a multitude of settings." (MSW)
  - "It provides you with a broad spectrum of knowledge about social justice as well as several social issues we face in our society today. There are more job opportunities and various types of work available with a degree in social work as well." (MSW)
  - "A social work degree is extremely versatile and allows you to work in many different areas." (MSW)
- Good knowledge base
  - "It is a very diverse and translatable field. There is a lot of opportunity, and it is a broad education. Social work provides a sound framework to work from, even if you are not in a 'traditional' social work role." (MSW)
  - "If you are interested in direct service provision with clients, social work provides the best, well-diversified prospective job field. There are endless job

opportunities, working with varieties of populations in many settings. Furthermore, social work is multidisciplinary degree that seems to encompass the fields of communications, sociology, and psychology with emphasis in critical thinking and ethics. The degree itself is quite well-rounded and has benefited me both personally and professionally." (MSW)

- "A social work degree provides a unique perspective to job candidates. The social work scholarly body of work is applicable to just about any job in just about any field. The value of the degree will only come when more people learn the relevance and provide job opportunities for those with MSWs." (MSW)
- "A social work degree broadens a person's perspective to view the full picture of a client's needs. This bigger picture helps us serve client's more effectively with better results." (MSW)
- "A social work degree equips you with the people skills, interviewing skills, assessing skills and documentation skills necessary in any helping profession. The degree is looked highly upon/preferred by employers in the helping profession." (BSW)
- "As Social Workers we are taught to think and conceptualize problems and solutions differently than other disciplines. We bring a unique perspective to an interdisciplinary team because we ourselves are already an interdisciplinary profession. There will always be a need for Social Workers in a myriad of positions and the training we receive is invaluable." (BSW)

• Social justice orientation
- "A social work degree is very valuable in that you can find a wide range of employment opportunities both in the Clinical field and also in Macro. It also allows you to advocate for others in many different ways. Direct service or behind the scenes. You can do therapy (like obtaining a counseling degree) but you can also do everything else. A social worker can work in a hospital, a clinic or a school setting. A social worker can also have their own private practice for therapy patients (if you obtain a clinical license). Also, only a Social worker can bill Medicaid for therapy patients, an LPC cannot. If you enjoy helping people and advocating for vulnerable populations, I would highly recommend obtaining a Master's degree in social work!" (MSW)
- "Flexibility in career choice and the ability to help others and those in need. The opportunity to advocate for those who don't have a voice." (MSW)
- "A social work degree is not only versatile, allowing for many career paths and opportunities, but it also provides a much-needed framework to understand and competently approach issues of power, privilege, and oppression on micro, mezzo, and macro levels." (MSW)
- "If you enjoy helping others and are self-motivated with a strong sense for social justice, social work is a wonderful option. The MSW opens opportunities that make day to day life more livable monetarily and gives a plethora of job opportunities. It's something I'm passionate about and if others are equally as passionate, I'd be happy to recommend it to them." (MSW)

• Promotes self-growth
- "A social work degree is a great degree for anyone to obtain who is looking to make any sort of positive change. I think throughout my undergrad and graduate program in social work I was able to find myself and become the person I really wanted to be through much self-reflection." (MSW)
- "A social work degree provides you with the necessary skills needed to grasp an understanding of oneself and others, in order to apply it to almost every job opportunity presented." (MSW)
- "It's a helping profession. You are able to know yourself, vulnerable populations, and the systems." (MSW)
- "While obtaining my Master's degree in social work I learned so much about myself and my love of helping others. I firmly believe that a social work degree can help you succeed in many different career opportunities even if it is not a social work position." (MSW)
- "Social work enabled me to look at things from different perspectives, to be critical in my thinking, and also reflect upon myself - all of which, I feel, are important life skills that are seldom emphasized on." (MSW)

The most frequent reasons given for not recommending a social work degree were as follows:

- Terrible pay (many referenced the difficulty of repaying student debt incurred in taking the degree)
  - "I would only recommend social work to those who have a partner with income or other sources of additional income. Social work is not a sustainable option if you are a single person working to support yourself. Of course, with many years of practice, social work can become a sustainable option. However- as a new master's level social worker the salaries being offered are just not competitive when compared to other fields. I can 'afford' to do social work because my husband (who only has his GED) makes more money annually than I do with my masters." (MSW)
  - "The cost of obtaining higher education is not equitable to how the field is valued in the job market. While I love what I do, I wonder if this investment was wise. I recognize that Public Loan Debt Forgiveness exists, but I will never own property or be able to support a family on my current income. This is especially true with my debt to income ratio." (MSW)
  - "Compensation does not match the MSW education and cost." (MSW)
  - "A lot of work for a little money. High burn out rates. Hard to find jobs without [an] MSW. But [too] expensive to go back to school to get it." (BSW)
  - "Exorbitant student loans. Licensure exam is an awful process and the content of the exam is not reflective of ability. In fact, it seems like a money pit for an already low earning profession. Fortunately, I've mostly raised my kids so I can indulge my passion for the work." (MSW)
- Low prestige (especially in non-clinical jobs)
  - "Many employers hire peoples who do not have social work degree to our jobs. As a social worker, many jobs require a license to do a job that a high schooler can do. The pay for us is extremely low for the amount of work we do. The requirement to do field placement is great but it does not count as work experience. Many jobs I have applied to told me I did not have experience. Somethings need to change before I recommend social work someone. Social work is a great profession however I wish we were recognized and paid for the hard work we do." (MSW)
  - "Personally, I think I would have been better suited to obtain a degree in a more relevant field had I not graduated with a SW degree. SW is not very well respected, pay is low, and it takes a long time to move up and actually earn a more living wage." (BSW)
  - "The money is bad and there is a low perception of it. Only if you are interested in becoming a therapist or direct care worker should you obtain this degree." (MSW)
  - "Expensive education and not very good return on investment. Just like teaching degrees, society just doesn't seem to value these roles despite how much we know they are important." (MSW)
- Difficulty finding jobs or too few jobs
  - "Although I love the premise behind social work and am still really passionate about it, I have decided to advance my career elsewhere. I searched for a social work job for months with no luck. Additionally, the salary of all the positions were terrible and I knew I would get burned out working such an intense job for such little pay :( " (MSW)
  - "High burn - out, pay is low, not many opportunities without a Master's degree." (BSW)
  - "There are too many programs in this [area], thus too many LMSWs for the available jobs, driving down pay." (MSW)
- Lack of entry-level job opportunities
  - "I would not recommend a bachelor's in social work degree to others because without years of experience or further education one may not be able to find a job." (BSW)
  - "Low salary, difficulty finding jobs when you need to be under supervision by a LCSW. Most open positions are seeking at minimum newly licensed LCSWs." (MSW)

### Future Plans of MSW Graduates

Four of five MSWs (80.6%) were either already licensed clinical social workers or planned to become licensed within the next 5 years (see Table 50).]

**Table 50: Whether Planning to Become a Clinical Social Worker in**

| Do you intend to become a licensed clinical social worker within the next 5 years? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes | 78.5 |
| No | 19.3 |
| I'm already a licensed clinical social worker. | 2.1 |
| **Total** | **100** |

The 43.9% of MSWs who indicated they planned on continuing their social work education is quite a high figure (see Table 51).

**Table 51: MSWs Planning to Continue Social Work Education**

| Do you plan to continue your social work education (or seek education that will assist you in a social work or social-work related career)? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes | 43.9 |
| No | 56.1 |
| **Total** | **100** |

African American MSWs were more likely than White MSWs to be planning to continue their social work education (48.4% vs 41.5%, not significant); see Table 52.

**Table 52: MSWs Planning to Continue Social Work Education, by Race**

| Do you plan to continue your social work education? | No | Yes | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 65.1 | 34.9 | 100 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 53.5 | 46.5 | 100 |
| African American | 51.6 | 48.4 | 100 |
| White | 58.5 | 41.5 | 100 |

Note: Table does not include "Other race," "More than one race," or "Decline to answer."

Of the 43.9% of MSWs who planned to continue their education, almost one third (32.2%) were planning to take a higher social work degree. Two of five MSWs planning a higher social work degree (39.3%) intended to seek a doctorate of social work (DSW) degree, and more than three of five (59.2%) intended to seek a PhD. However, almost a quarter of MSWs planning to continue their education (23.2%) intended to seek another degree not in social work (see Tables 53 and 54).

**Table 53: MSW Plans to Continue Social Work Education**

| How do you plan to continue your education? | Percentage of those continuing education | Percentage of all respondents |
|---|---|---|
| I plan to take a higher social work degree. | 32.2 | 14.1 |
| I plan to take another degree not in social work. | 23.2 | 10.2 |
| I have other plans for continuing my education. | 44.6 | 19.6 |
| Total | 100 | 43.9 |

**Table 54: Plans to Continue Social Work Education, Further Degrees Planned**

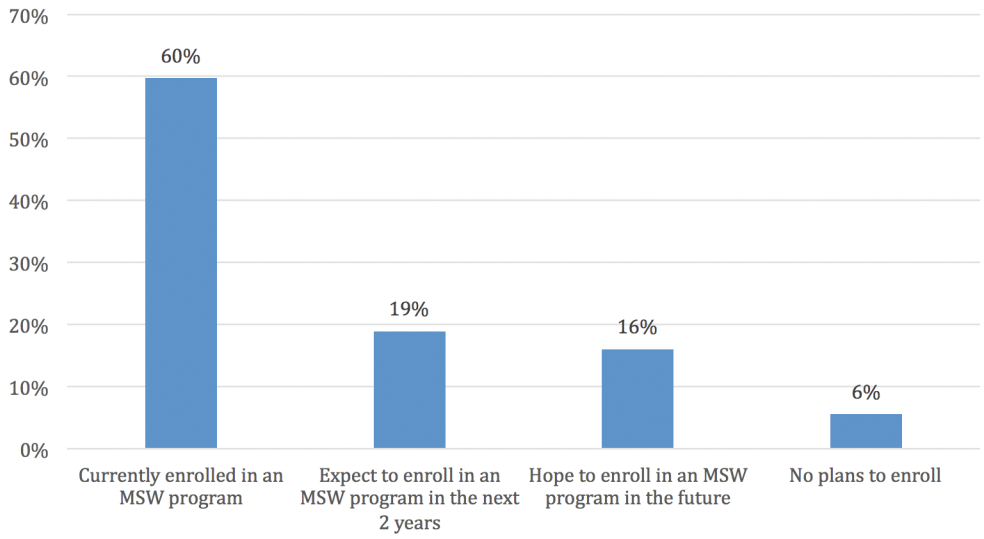
| Which higher social work degree to you plan to take? | Percentage of Those Planning Higher Social Work Degree | Percentage of all MSW Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| DSW or equivalent | 39.2 | 5.5 |
| PhD | 59.3 | 8.4 |
| Other | 1.3 | 0.2 |
| **Total** | **100** | **14.1** |

# Findings: BSWs

The analysis of the responses of BSWs is limited because there were only 311 BSW respondents, which is itself a reflection of the smaller size of BSW programs compared to MSW programs (the number of participating programs was similar between BSW and MSW degrees). This section therefore presents some general findings, but a more detailed analysis by such factors as gender, race/ethnicity, or region is not possible given the small numbers. Analysis in terms of experience in the job market is further limited by the fact that most respondents were already enrolled in MSW programs and many did not actively look for a job.

More than half of all BSWs (59.6%) indicated being currently enrolled in an MSW program (Figure 12E). This is significantly higher than the number who did not look for a job because they were going back to school (43.1%). This may reflect those going to school nevertheless searching for part-time work or individuals who had looked for a job before deciding to go back to school. Another 18.9% were expecting to enroll in the next 2 years. Only 5.5% had no plans to enroll. Clearly, the BSW is a major pathway to obtaining an MSW (see Figure 12).

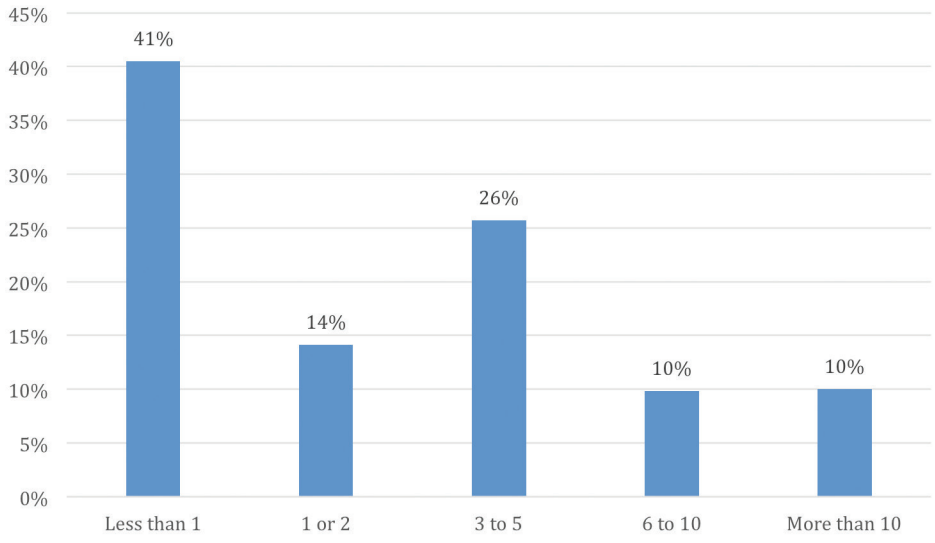
## Figure 12. BSWs Planning to Obtain an MSW




Question asked: "Do you plan to obtain an MSW in the future?" (*N*=310)

As with MSW graduates, many BSWs had extensive work experience before entering BSW programs, albeit much less than MSWs. For BSWs, 20% had 6 or more years of work experience prior to entering a BSW program (compared to 32% for the MSW graduates); see Figure 13.

## Figure 13. Prior Work Experience of BSW Graduates




Question asked: "How many years were you working before entering your social work education program?" (*N*=309)

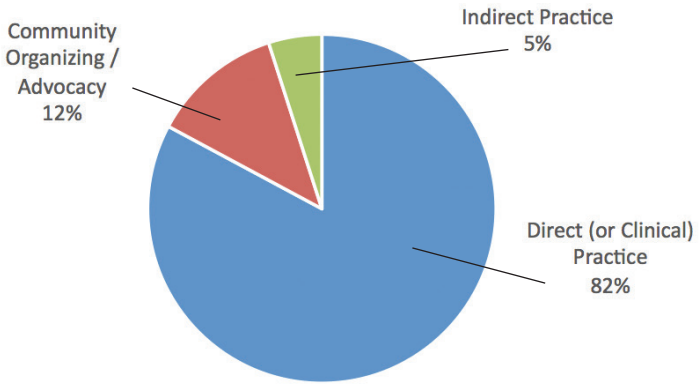
The education program for most BSW graduates focused on direct or clinical practice (see Figure 14).

**Table 55: Types of Positions BSWs Are Entering**

| Which of the following best describes your principal position?[a] | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Actively working in a job that requires a social degree and/or license | 26 |
| Actively working in a job as a social worker that does not require a social work degree or license | 19 |
| Actively working not as a social worker but in a job in which you believe a social work education has provided relevant preparation | 24 |
| Actively working in a job for which a social work education was not a necessary or relevant preparation | 31 |

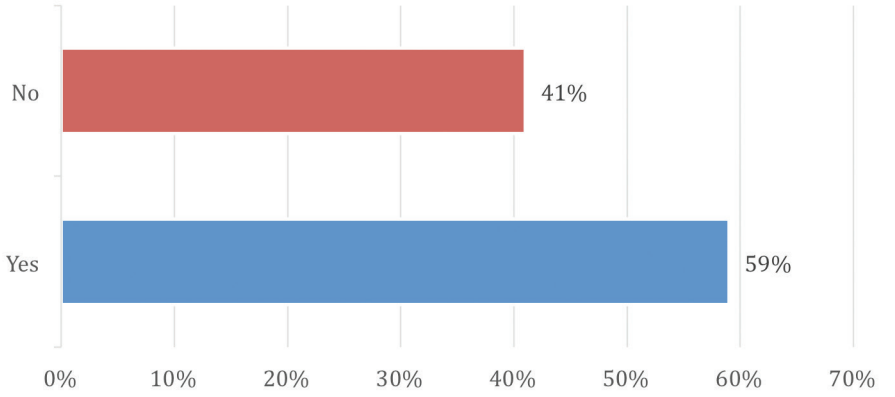
[a] Among BSWs who are working or have accepted an offer of work (*N*=185).

**Figure 14. General Practice Focus of BSW Social Work Education**



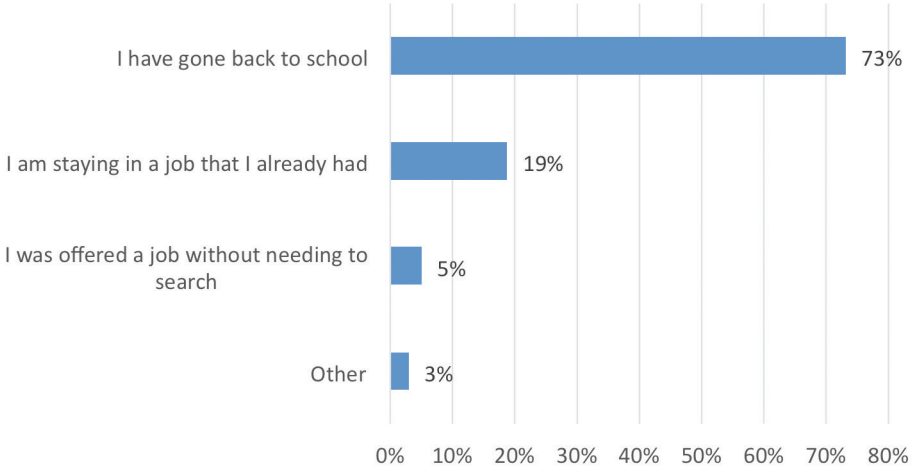

As seen in Figures 15 and 16, a significant percentage of BSW graduates (41%) did not search for a job; the most common reason was that they were continuing their education (73%). The second major reason for not looking was that they were staying in a job they already had (19%).

## Figure 15. BSWs Who Searched and Did Not Search for Jobs




Question asked: "Did you search for a job before (or since) graduating this year? (*N*=309)

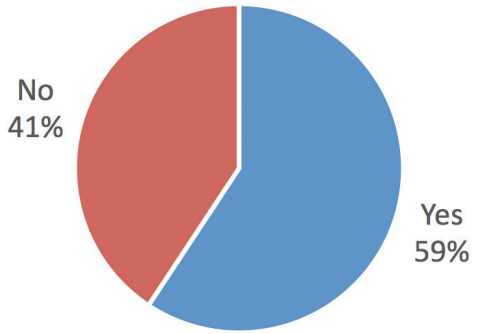
## Figure 16. BSWs' Reasons for Not Searching for a Job (of Those Who Did Not Search)




Denominators are those who did not search (*N*=126).

Considering those who searched and found a job, those who stayed in a job, and those who returned to a job, 59% of the BSW graduates were working at the time of the survey or had accepted a job offer (see Figure 17).

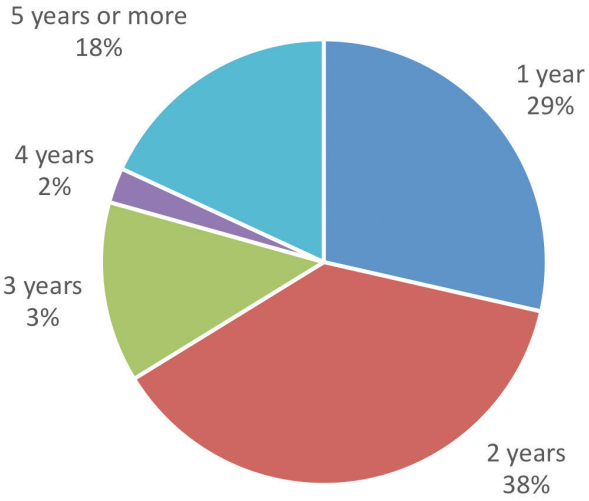
## Figure 17. BSWs Working or Who Accepted a Position




Question asked: "Are you currently working (or have you accepted an offer of work?" (*N*=305)

In addition to the high percentage of BSW graduates going on to continue their education, 67% of those in jobs who responded to the question indicated they expected to be in the position for only 1 or 2 years. This limits the ability of the survey of new BSW graduates to inform about the jobs that BSWs have in the long term (see Figure 18).

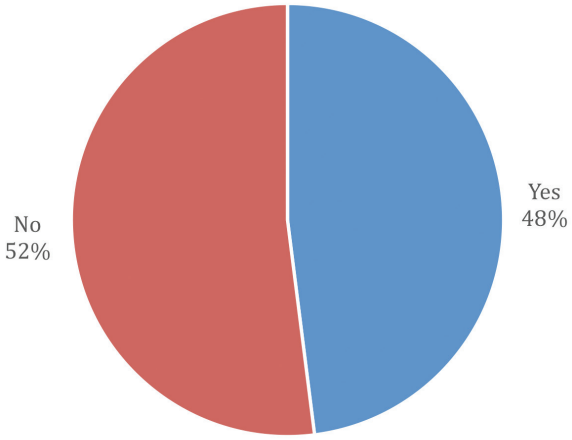
## Figure 18. BSWs Expected Time in Current Position




Question asked: "How many years do you expect to be in your current principal position?" (*N* = 77)

As indicated in Figure 19, nearly half the BSWs who had searched for a job responded that they had a difficult time finding a position they were satisfied with. This indicates that the job market for BSWs is somewhat limited.

## Figure 19. BSW Difficulty Finding a Satisfactory Position




Question asked: "Did you have difficulty finding a position you were satisfied with?" (*N*=174)

The majority of BSWs (56%) had earnings in the range $30,000 to $39,999 in their new position (see Table 56).

## Table 56: Distribution of BSW Expected Income

| What is your expected total gross income from your principal position?[a] | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Under $20,0000 | 17 |
| $20,000 to $29,999 | 9 |
| $30,000 to $39,999 | 56 |
| $40,000 to $49,999 | 16 |
| $50,000 to $59,999 | 1 |
| $60,000 and over | 1 |

[a] Among BSWs in direct social work jobs (*N*=74).

# Next Steps for Researching Recent Social Work Graduates

Plans are underway to survey the 2019 social work graduates with a goal of further increasing the number of respondents to facilitate in-depth analysis and identification of possible trends. The 2017 and 2018 results will provide important benchmarks because trends in the supply and demand will be measured. In addition, GW HWI plans to resurvey the 2017 graduates.

The 2018 survey included a specific question regarding willingness to participate in follow-up surveys: 88.5% of MSWs expressed willingness to have their e-mail addresses retained for future surveys, opening up the possibility of longitudinal study of their social work career pathways (see Table 57).

**Table 57: Willingness to Participate in Future Research**

| The GW HWI, in consultation with social work organizations, may undertake future surveys. May we keep your e-mail address on file and contact you again for these surveys? | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Yes, I am willing to participate in future studies and authorize the GW-HWI and CSWE to keep my e-mail address securely for up to 5 years. My e-mail address may not be used for any other purpose than for future social work workforce surveys. | 88.5 |
| No | 11.5 |
| **Total** | **100** |

# Appendix I: Further Description of Weighting Methodology

Given our desire to weight on four characteristics, we constructed survey weights using a manual iterative strategy. In other words, we computed each weight separately, yet sequentially, using six iterations. First, we computed the *auspice* weight (Weight A), weight the data using Weight A, and then generated the weighted frequencies for *region*. Next, we computed the *region* weight (Weight B), weighted the data using Weight A * Weight B, and then generated the weighted frequencies for *race*. Third, we computed the *race* weight (Weight C), weighted the data using Weight A* Weight B* Weight C, and then generated the weighted frequencies for *ethnicity*. Finally, we computed the ethnicity (Weight D), and then generated the weighted frequencies for *auspice* for a second round of iterations. This process was repeated for 12 iterations overall (where all data is weighted by Weight A*Weight B* Weight C* Weight D*Weight A' * Weight B' * Weight C' * Weight D', etc.) until the weighted frequencies and population frequencies converged. The final survey weight was equal to the product of all 12 weights.

Weighting was carried out independently for the BSW sample and the MSW sample. Missing data on any of the four variables for any respondent dropped that respondent from the weighted analysis, which left 1,606 respondents (289 BSWs and 1,317 MSWs) in the weighted analysis. Several cross-checks were carried out to assess the extent

to which the survey respondents and the schools from which they graduated might be considered representative of the national population of social work graduates. Appendix 2 compares the known graduating population nationally (based on CSWE data for 2017) with the survey respondents before and after weighting by school CSWE region, type of sponsorship, and graduates' race/ethnicity. The New England and Mid-Atlantic regions were over-represented, and the Northeast, West, Southeast, and South Central regions were underrepresented among MSWs. Among BSWs Mid- and North Central, Mid-Atlantic, Northwest, and West were overrepresented, and New England, Northeast, Southeast, and South Central were underrepresented. By institution sponsorship there was underrepresentation of private religious schools and overrepresentation of private nonreligious schools among MSW programs. Among BSW programs public schools were underrepresented and private religious schools were overrepresented. By race/ethnicity there was underrepresentation of African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos among MSW as well as BSW graduates.

# Appendix II: Representativeness of Survey Respondents Compared to All Social Work Graduates Nationally

**Table A1: Comparison of MSW Graduate Respondents to All MSW Graduates by Census Region and Institution Type**

| | Population (%) (*N*=27,270)[a] | Respondents (%) (*N*=1,317) | Respondents After Weighting (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Region**[b] | | | |
| Great Lakes | 18.1 | 19.4 | 18.1 |
| Mid- and North Central | 7.3 | 8.0 | 7.3 |
| Mid-Atlantic | 7.5 | 11.8 | 7.5 |
| New England | 7.4 | 22.7 | 7.4 |
| Northeast | 18.3 | 8.5 | 18.3 |
| Northwest | 3.5 | 2.7 | 3.5 |
| Southeast and South Central | 23.0 | 15.0 | 23.0 |
| West | 15.0 | 11.9 | 15.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |
| **Sponsorship Type** | | | |
| Public | 63.6 | 62.3 | 64.1 |
| Private religious | 15.2 | 9.2 | 15.3 |
| Private other | 20.5 | 28.5 | 20.6 |
| For profit | 0.8 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018)

[b] CSWE's 10 regions were collapsed into eight to partially even-up the balance of graduate numbers.

## Table A2: Comparison of MSW Respondents to All MSW Graduates by Birth Sex

| Birth Sex | Populationa (%) | Respondents (%) | Respondents After Weighting (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 80.3 | 90.6 | 90.9 |
| Male | 12.9 | 8.9 | 8.4 |
| Not known[b] | 6.9 | 0.5 | 0.7 |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018).

[b] In CSWE's statistics "Not known" represents incomplete returns from programs. In the survey data it represents respondents who declined to answer the question about their birth sex.

## Table A3: Comparison of MSW Respondents to All MSW Graduates by Race

| Race | Population[a] | % of Graduates Respondents | Respondents After Weighting |
|---|---|---|---|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 1.1 | 0.8 | 1.1 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 5.0 | 3.7 | 5.0 |
| African American | 22.7 | 11.7 | 22.9 |
| White | 67.5 | 72.7 | 66.0 |
| Other race | 1.0 | 4.1 | 1.0 |
| More than one race | 2.8 | 5.0 | 2.8 |
| Unknown | N/A | 0.8 | 1.2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018).

Note: N/A=not applicable.

## Table A4: Comparison of MSW Respondents to All MSW Graduates by Ethnicity

| Ethnicity | Population[a] | % of Graduates Respondents | Respondents After Weighting |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hispanic/Latino | 14.4 | 11.4 | 14.4 |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018).

## Table A5: Comparison of BSW Respondents to All BSW Graduates by School Census Region, Sponsorship, and Co-Location With MSW Program

| | Population (*N*=20,295)[a] | Percentage of Graduates Respondents (*N*=289) | Respondents After Weighting |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Region** | | | |
| Great Lakes | 24.9 | 26.1 | 24.9 |
| Mid- and North Central | 7.8 | 14.5 | 7.9 |
| Mid-Atlantic | 9.2 | 11.6 | 9.2 |
| New England | 4.5 | 2.6 | 4.6 |
| Northeast | 9.5 | 4.2 | 9.7 |
| Northwest | 3.2 | 5.8 | 3.2 |
| Southeast and South Central | 32.4 | 24.1 | 32.1 |
| West | 8.5 | 11.3 | 8.5 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |
| **Sponsorship** | | | |
| Public | 78.2 | 68.2 | 78.1 |
| Private religious | 16.9 | 28.6 | 17.0 |
| Private other | 4.9 | 3.2 | 4.9 |
| **Total** | | | |
| Co-Location of BSW Program with MSW Program | 59.1% | 78.3% | |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018).

[b] CSWE's 10 regions were collapsed into eight to partially even up the balance of graduate numbers.

## Table A6: Comparison of BSW Respondents to All BSW Graduates by Birth Sex

| Birth Sex | Population[a] | Percentage of Graduates Respondents | Respondents After Weighting |
|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 83.5 | 90.0 | 90.3 |
| Male | 11.6 | 10.0 | 9.7 |
| Not Known | 4.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018)

## Table A7: Comparison of BSW Respondents to All BSW Graduates by Race

| Race | Population | % of Graduates Respondents | Respondents After Weighting |
|---|---|---|---|
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 1.2 | 0.7 | 1.1 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 3.0 | 3.8 | 3.0 |
| African American | 25.9 | 13.8 | 25.7 |
| White | 65.7 | 70.5 | 65.2 |
| Other race | 0.7 | 4.1 | 0.7 |
| More than one race | 3.5 | 4.5 | 3.5 |
| Unknown | N/A | N/A | 0.8 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018)

Note: N/A=not applicable.

## Table A8: Comparison of BSW Respondents to All BSW Graduates by Ethnicity

| Ethnicity | Population[a] | % of Graduates Respondents | Respondents After Weighting |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hispanic | 16.7 | 14.3 | 16.7 |

[a] Source: CSWE (2018)

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