

CHAPTER

1

A Road Map to the Profession of Social Work

What You Will Learn

- The definitions of the three scopes of practice: micro, mezzo, and macro
- An overview of the five major areas of social work practice: generalist, clinical, macro, international, and nontraditional
- Sample skill sets, job titles, positions, descriptions, and case studies for each area of practice

Action Plan

- Acquaint yourself with the different practice options in the field of social work
- Consider how the work you have done or want to do fits into these categories
- Use this information to start thinking about next steps in your career advancement

This book offers a lifelong road map to your social work career, providing guideposts as you find your career path, change directions, or chart a new course. Social work is broad and offers myriad opportunities to contribute to the field you find rewarding. While this broad array of choices brings many people into this profession, it can be overwhelming to new graduates or seasoned social workers making a career change. The purpose of this chapter is to orient you so you can best maneuver your

way to your destination. We will define and give examples of micro, mezzo, and macro social work careers both domestically and internationally. We will describe five scopes of social work practice: generalist, clinical, macro, international, and nontraditional. Under each scope of practice, we will explore a variety of job titles and skills, required degrees, professional licensure and certification information, and sample job descriptions. Case studies of clients we have worked with over the years will illustrate social work's vast career options. For those of you who are mid-career or thinking of seeking a PhD or DSW, we have included this information in chapter 8, which provides an overview of advanced careers in social work.

As we look at the profession from a career planning perspective, let us begin with the foundations on which the profession is built. Social work is unique in that it is grounded in the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW; 2021) *Code of Ethics*. Let us begin with the mission of social work according to the code:

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. (NASW, 2021, p. 1)

While the mission of social work as defined by the *Code of Ethics* is broad in its scope, encompassing various aspects of human well-being and societal issues, it can be challenging to apply it to the multifaceted nature of the work required to fulfill this mission. Breaking it down into layers can be helpful. In order to understand the depth and breadth of the social work profession, it is important to know that

the practice of social work is divided into three systems, which are like layers, one building off the next. At the center is the "person-in-environment" (PIE) theory, which is central to and connects all three systems: micro, mezzo and macro social work. (Conrad-Amlicke, n.d., para. 4)

In the *Social Workers' Desk Reference*, researchers James M. Karls and Maura E. O'Keefe (2009) defined *person in environment* as the way to reference the complex problems that people face related to their social functioning and "in terms of societal constructs." The person-in-environment framework is based on the belief that individuals can best be understood in the context of their environment, which includes their family, health, spiritual beliefs, social identity, and political views. This is why social work is different from other similar helping professions and why it offers a broad scope of career opportunities. Micro, mezzo, and macro practice all focus on improving well-being but differ in method, scope of impact, and how closely you work with the benefitting population. Many social work positions have a combination of micro, mezzo, and macro focused practice.

Micro Practice: Micro social work focuses on helping individuals, families, and groups with emotional, financial, or basic needs, and is often referred to as “direct practice” or “clinical work.” The focus of this work is to provide one-on-one assistance to help clients meet challenges through social services, counseling, or healthcare. An example of this type of work would be a domestic violence advocate for a client seeking assistance in a family violence center.

Mezzo Practice: Mezzo practice provides direct work but in small communities, such as schools, churches, and neighborhoods. The focus of this work is to assist small groups of people through advocacy, community organizing, or program development; for example, creating a food pantry. Another example of mezzo work would be a school social worker who assists parents by organizing a community health fair to provide vaccinations and resources for general wellness.

Macro Practice: Macro practice addresses social problems, with a broader view of impacting systematic injustice or change. This type of work includes policy, research, and evaluation. An example of this type of work would be a social worker who works at a public policy think tank to research and write policy related to children and Medicaid.

Social workers are increasingly working at more than one level of practice in one job. This is one of the great advantages of the social work profession! Many jobs allow you to create a niche for yourself by gaining skills in different areas depending on the needs of the clients. For example, a school social worker often helps individual students one-on-one (micro) and also creates and facilitates social skills groups (mezzo). Next, we will discuss the different types of social work that fall within micro, mezzo, and macro practice, including the five areas: generalist, clinical, macro, international, and nontraditional. Appendix A: Comprehensive List of Social Work Skills shows you which skills you will need to develop, depending on which area of practice speaks to you.

GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK

Generalist social work is commonly practiced at the BSW level but can also be practiced at the MSW level. Generalist social workers know the basic concepts of social work at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, including the ability to apply preventative care and intervention to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities while following ethical principles defined by NASW and social work licensure. Common skills include screening, assessment, problem solving, identification of resources and referrals, and using a strengths-based, systems theory approach. Generalists are trained to integrate direct practice, social policy, and research into their chosen career paths. Many social workers who follow a generalist career path choose positions in casework, community organizing, policy development, or non-profit coordination. They are trained to facilitate groups; conduct research; and

broker between clients, agencies, and other sources to help clients. These social workers also possess relevant communication skills, including empathetic listening, case documentation, and advocacy.

Licensure for Generalist Social Work

Each state currently determines the levels and requirements for social work licensure. In some states, a person with a BSWs is eligible to be licensed as a social worker at the bachelor's level. The bachelor's-level social work license may be required in some states for certain roles as case managers, volunteer coordinators, community outreach workers, and child or adult protective services workers.

Sample Job Titles

Some of the job titles that you may encounter as a generalist social worker include:

- Intake specialist
- Case worker/manager
- Entry-level social worker
- Family service specialist
- Volunteer coordinator
- Community engagement coordinator
- Group facilitator
- Human services coordinator

Sample Skills

Some of the knowledge areas and skills that a generalist social worker needs to know include:

- Assessment skills
- Case management
- Client-centered approaches
- Community outreach
- Development and implementation of service plans
- Knowledge of human behavior and theory
- Verbal, oral, and written communication skills
- Understanding of group dynamics
- Interpretation of laws and policies
- Designing, planning, and leading programs

For a more comprehensive list of generalist social work skills, see Appendix A. Box 1.1 features a generalist job description, demonstrating how generalist skills and knowledge can help define the role of a particular job title.

Box 1.1**Sample Generalist Job Description: Medical Social Worker, BSW****Job Description**

Under the supervision of a clinical social worker, support patients and families dealing with medically related problems by connecting with appropriate resources.

Responsibilities

- Assess patients and their families to determine their needs and eligibility for services
- Develop and implement a service plan and provide services to patients and families, including resolution of practical problems of daily living
- Connect with outside agencies and coordinate referrals
- Maintain appropriate documentation
- Generate and maintain current list of hospital and community services and resources
- Support families and social work team with patient discharge planning
- Maintain contact with insurance companies to secure authorizations for admission and ongoing care

Qualifications

- BSW and one year of professional experience working in healthcare setting or human service agency preferred
- Knowledge of healthcare and healthcare delivery systems
- Problem-solving skills to evaluate a patient's concrete needs and create and implement a treatment plan
- Interpersonal skills to effectively interact with patients, families, medical staff, and outside agencies

CASE STUDY**Dakota**

While Dakota was completing her BSW, she applied for and completed the Title IV-E program, a federally funded program that is designed to prepare social work students to work in the child welfare system. After graduation, Dakota pursued her licensure as an LBSW and was hired as an investigator for Child Protective Services. In this position, she investigated cases of child abuse and neglect. This role involved interviewing people including teachers, doctors, and nurses; conducting forensic investigations and assessments; and documenting all relevant information. She was required to

maintain objectivity and empathy for the families that were in these crisis situations. Although this was difficult work, she implemented a good self-care plan including daily journaling and exercise. In the process of investigating her cases, she became interested in offering resources to the families she was working with. This experience inspired her to pursue a case management certification, which she completed in one year. After two years of working with Child Protective Services, she realized that her passion was working for children entering the foster care system. With the experience she gained in her role of investigator, including engaging with children and families, addressing the trauma of removing children and documentation, she applied for and was hired as a case manager for the Helping Hand foster care program. Here she was able to apply the skills she had learned, such as crisis intervention, assessment, and documentation, and integrate her knowledge of case management.

CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK

Clinical social work involves doing therapy directly with clients and requires an MSW degree. Clinical social workers offer services in a wide variety of settings, including community mental health, primary care, hospitals, nonprofit organizations, and private practice. This specialty practice area of social work focuses on the mental health and well-being of individuals, couples, groups, and families through assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. Social workers who provide these services must be licensed or certified at the master's or clinical level in their state of practice.

Some of the job titles you may encounter as a clinical social worker include:

- Clinical social worker
- Behavioral health clinician
- Counselor
- Clinical director
- Clinician/therapist
- Family violence counselor
- Hospice social worker
- Health career social worker
- Addictions counselor
- Mitigation specialist

Some of the knowledge areas and skills that a clinical social worker needs to know include:

- Knowledge of cognitive conditions, mental health issues, and the revised fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2022)
- Assessment and diagnosis

- Treatment planning
- Group facilitation
- Crisis intervention
- Grief and loss theory
- Discharge planning
- Conducting individual and group therapy
- Documentation
- Supervisory experience and training

For a more comprehensive list of clinical social work skills, see Appendix A. Box 1.2 features a clinical job description, demonstrating how clinical skills and knowledge can help define the role of a particular job title.

Box 1.2

Sample Clinical Job Description: Clinical Social Worker

Job Description

As the licensed clinical social worker, you will be responsible for comprehensive assessment and treatment of persons whose lives are impacted by cognitive conditions, mental health issues (depression, anxiety, adjustment disorder, Alzheimer's, dementia), or a declining capacity to function independently.

Your duties will include, but are not limited to, completing cognitive and mental health evaluations; delivering cognitive and emotional therapies; completing timely and accurate charting; and providing therapy in individual and group settings.

Responsibilities

- Function as part of a multidisciplinary team that provides care for seniors and their families in nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Assist in training of new psychotherapists
- Be available to answer questions of clinical nature
- Lead or develop nursing home in-service training
- Attend behavioral rounds at nursing home facilities

Qualifications

- Master's degree in social work and active clinical social work license
- Geriatric experience a plus
- Electronic medical records experience a plus
- Testing experience a plus

Licensure for Clinical Social Work

If you want to practice as a clinical social worker, looking into the requirements and process for licensing in the state you want to practice in should be a top priority. First and foremost, as stated earlier, you must have an MSW degree to do clinical social work and advance to a clinical social work license. This licensing process also requires you to have a clinical supervisor and a supervision plan. Familiarize yourself with the requirements in your state of practice and seek opportunities that will give you the required experience (usually assessment, treatment, and diagnosis) and provide a means for supervision in the process. If supervision is not provided, you may certainly negotiate for it when you accept the position (see chapter 7). In most instances, you will be able to apply for job opportunities that require a clinical license if you have passed the test; however, you may not be able to practice until you obtain the license.

CASE STUDY

Emmett

Emmett became a licensed clinical social worker at a local medical care facility with a passion for person-centered care. He worked as part of an interprofessional healthcare team that provided care to patients experiencing medical issues. He primarily assisted residents in attaining or maintaining the highest physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being possible, given their diagnosis. Emmett provided triages and assessments and developed treatment plans that sometimes included brief interventions. He utilized evidence-based practices in his approach to working with clients, managed his case load, and completed case notes regularly. He worked with the patients' families to connect them with outside supports. In addition to gaining field experience in a healthcare setting, he completed both BSW and MSW degrees. Through his coursework he learned about the field of gerontology and gained knowledge of interpersonal and family/system dynamics.

MACRO SOCIAL WORK

Macro social work is an intervention designed to bring about change at the organizational, community, and policy levels, and can be done with a BSW or an MSW. Macro social work practice can involve work in management/administration, community organization, policy, evaluation and research, and development/fundraising work. Macro social workers are employed in many settings, including nonprofit organizations, government agencies, universities/colleges, businesses, think tanks, foundations, and consulting firms.

The following are examples of common macro-focused roles, including some job titles and skills needed for each line of work. Keep in mind that positions are fluid and may require skills that cut across several macro areas.

Administration/Development

Administration/development are usually leadership roles that involve the management of human service agencies and nonprofit organizations. Macro social workers in development create funding revenue and funding streams for organizations.

Some of the job titles you may encounter when researching macro-related jobs in administration/development include:

- Assistant director/director/executive director
- Manager/supervisor
- Program officer
- Project coordinator
- Fund/grant manager
- Development officer
- Engagement specialist

Some of the skills and knowledge one needs to be successful in administration/development positions include:

- Interpersonal (e.g., communication and engagement)
- Strategic planning
- Finance
- Organization
- Problem solving and decision making
- Training and talent management
- Search engine optimization
- Event planning
- Grant writing/fundraising

Community Organizing

Community organizing focuses on the process of mobilizing people to address community issues within systems. Community organizing involves advocacy work and creates change at a grassroots level. Some of the job titles you may encounter when researching macro-related jobs in community organizing include:

- Community outreach coordinator
- Project coordinator
- Community organizer
- Community liaison
- Engagement coordinator

Some of the skills and knowledge one needs to be successful in community organization include:

- Consensus building
- Group facilitation
- Creating community partnerships
- Advocacy
- Negotiation/conflict resolution
- Event planning
- Grant writing/fundraising
- Search engine optimization

Policy/Evaluation/Research

Policy involves addressing social issues in policies and procedures that govern organizations and locales. Macro social workers in evaluation and research analyze programs and policies using qualitative and quantitative modalities.

Some of the job titles you may encounter when researching jobs in policy, research, and/or evaluation include:

- Policy/data analyst
- Legislative aid
- Professor
- Elected official
- Policy and strategy specialist
- Public policy manager
- Data and evaluation consultant/specialist
- Researcher
- Data manager/specialist

Some of the skills and knowledge one needs to be successful in policy/evaluation/research jobs include:

- Synthesizing and analyzing information
- Data collection and analysis
- Communication (writing, presenting, persuading)
- Budgeting
- Negotiation
- Team building
- Project management
- Survey design
- Needs assessment
- Project/program design
- Technology

For a more comprehensive list of macro social work skills, see Appendix A. Box 1.3 features a macro social work job description, demonstrating how macro skills and knowledge can help define the role of a particular job title.

Box 1.3

Sample Macro Social Work Job Description: Community Engagement Officer, Homes for Families

Homes for Families is a nonprofit community development organization dedicated to strengthening families and their communities through the development of housing and neighborhoods. We look to empower individuals and ensure economic justice through strengthening financial knowledge of our community members and encouraging advocacy and grassroots community organizing. Supporting and fostering diverse and inclusive communities is a priority of Housing Families and is demonstrated through our staffing, programs, and approach to community building.

Job Description

We are looking to hire a collaborative, solution-oriented community engagement officer committed to Homes for Families' priorities of maximizing housing stability, health, and wellness and increasing economic resiliency of our families and community members. We do this through leadership and advocacy training, financial stability training and coaching, and working in partnership with other human service agencies that provide support services such as elder services, workforce development, domestic violence prevention, and after-school programs. The community engagement officer focuses on connecting residents to social service providers, increasing the income of families, and supporting neighborhood-led activities and initiatives. The community engagement officer works closely with a variety of stakeholders, including residents, neighborhood organizations, and local government agencies.

Responsibilities

Resident Leadership Development: Refine and lead our resident leadership program, which encourages active resident involvement in our efforts around housing stability and community development. Create a system for identifying and engaging future leaders. Identify and lead community advocacy efforts that address the needs of our community and encourage resident involvement.

Community Partnerships: Cultivate relationships with community partners that focus on housing, workforce development, and supporting families experiencing housing instability. Represent agency at local and state-wide meetings and initiatives.

Resident Training: Create and execute resident trainings to promote economic responsibility and success focusing on topics such as budgeting, education, and home ownership.

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Evaluation and Needs Assessment: Ensure an effective and regular needs assessment and evaluation plan to continually meet the needs of our clients and ensure the effectiveness of our efforts. Analyze and synthesize the data into both internal reports and external communication pieces.

Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree and at least two to three years of experience in community organizing, housing, and/or resident support services or a related master's degree
- Strong facilitation, communication, and customer service skills
- Strong client management skills
- Strong organizational and decision-making skills along with the ability and desire to work independently and collaboratively
- A demonstrated commitment to working with a diverse population in a way that demonstrates respect and understanding and encourages the opportunity for clients to thrive
- Bilingual (e.g., English plus Spanish, Mandarin, Haitian Creole) a plus

Licensure for Macro Social Work

Job positions in the macro social work area often do not require social work licensure. There are only a handful of states that have a nonclinical or macro license category. Getting a social work master's-level license as a macro practicing social worker might be valuable in a variety of different circumstances: if you work in a setting with many other social workers and you want to indicate your commitment to the field, if you might supervise social work interns or BSW-level social workers, or if you work in a setting with many degreed or professionally licensed individuals.

CASE STUDY

Dwayne

After earning his MSW, Dwayne completed a two-year post-degree Presidential Management Fellowship and was hired as a program analyst for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He oversees projects and programs to address housing needs in an urban city and evaluates fair housing issues. To be effective at his job, Dwayne uses interpersonal skills to engage with the community and his co-workers when working on team projects. This job also requires Dwayne to research and analyze data, interpret policies, and manage large projects, requiring excellent organizational skills. He must provide guidance on complex, sensitive, and sometimes controversial issues. His fellowship experience, along with a field placement at

a local city council, helped him understand how to work within larger systems and realize that social workers contribute a people-centered and empowering approach to organizations.

Growing up, Dwayne wondered about the history of his town and its people, and about the issues they faced every day—especially the lack of adequate, safe, and affordable housing. Dwayne has the goal of advocating for and creating equitable policies while also hoping to create spaces for people who experience systematic oppression to have their voices heard and their challenges resolved on a macro level.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

International social work is similar in focus to domestic social work in that it can be done with any level of social work degree. International social workers contribute to program development, policy, practice, and research that improve the lives and well-being of individuals, families, and communities around the world. These social workers help those dealing with issues such as poverty, health and mental health issues, trauma, displacement, and housing, most often in developing countries. Examples of international social work practice include human rights, social development, advocacy, poverty, and social justice, as well as responding to conflict, disasters, and the needs of displaced populations such as immigrants and refugees.

International social work is informed by a clinical understanding of the impact that violence, displacement, and other such events have on a group or individual. However, international social workers do not provide group/individual clinical interventions. This work is done by local staff. International social work is more macro in focus, including training, community assessment and organizing, program design, implementation and evaluation, promoting humanitarian assistance, postdisaster development and reconstruction, and social and economic development. International social work can be done in settings like nongovernmental organizations, higher education, research centers, domestic agencies that help with refugee and immigrant resettlement, international relief organizations, human rights organizations, refugee relief organizations, and intergovernmental organizations.

Some of the job titles you may encounter when researching international social work jobs include:

- Psychosocial coordinator
- Gender-based violence coordinator
- Child protection specialist
- Monitoring and evaluation manager
- Refugee resettlement manager
- Technical advisor
- Program coordinator for anti-trafficking
- Humanitarian assistant officer
- Case worker

Some of the knowledge areas and skills that are necessary to be successful in international social worker include:

- Capacity building
- Building community partnerships
- Training
- Program management
- Language other than English
- Resourcefulness
- Adaptability
- Cultural awareness, humility
- Evaluation

For a more comprehensive list of international social work skills, see Appendix A.

Licensure for International Social Work

There is currently no international social work license. You can choose to obtain and maintain your license in a particular U.S. state, but this does not give you permission to work clinically internationally nor allow you to obtain the clinical hours needed for an advanced clinical social work license in the United States.

Box 1.4 features an international social work job description, demonstrating how skills and knowledge can help define the role of a particular job title.

CASE STUDY

Erica

As a gender-based violence specialist for the International Refugee Service, Erica worked in East Africa in a large refugee settlement. In her role, she applied her knowledge of gender-based violence and child protection to provide advocacy and raise awareness of violence for children and women refugees. Erica worked with, oversaw, and helped train community-based volunteers and workers and created collaborative relationships with community partners and other local nongovernmental organizations. Being successful in this role required excellent case management, training, and communication skills and the ability to remain effective in difficult and often unpredictable circumstances. Erica had previous experience domestically working in the Department for Children and Families as a protective case manager and did a semester-long field placement in South Africa working with victims of trafficking.

Box 1.4**Sample International Job Description: Education and Youth Employment Project Officer, Catholic Refugee Services, Central America****Job Description**

The Youth Employment Project is a new initiative focused on increasing equitable access to formal educational opportunities for potential migrants and returnees. The goal is to engender hope, prosperity, and positive self-worth in their lives and reduce the need to migrate from their home country.

Responsibilities

- Conduct outreach with potential youth trainees, community businesses, and local governments to conduct needs assessment, create synergy, and articulate the mutual benefit of this new program
- Collaborate with local education centers to develop and improve education and workforce development programs that result in skills development, job training, and placement in the local community
- Facilitate groups of youth participants to support their well-being as they participate in this new initiative

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in education, international relations, the social sciences, or related field from an accredited academic institution with two years of relevant professional experience or a master's degree in the previously mentioned fields
- Working experience in technical vocational training, job creation, and placement that addresses gender- and social inclusion-related education constraints
- Experience in working with migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, victims of trafficking, and other vulnerable groups
- Prior work experience with international humanitarian organizations, nongovernmental, or government institutions/organizations in a multicultural setting is an advantage
- Fluency in Spanish
- Familiarity with and commitment to youth development with attention to addressing gender equality and social inclusion

NONTRADITIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Social workers have many transferable skills that play valuable roles in other disciplines and industries considered nontraditional social work. These areas include politics, technology, corporate, and education. Social workers bring unique strengths, skills, and perspectives to this work, including systems theory, a strengths-based

perspective, and advocacy, all viewed through a social justice lens. Additionally, social workers possess valuable transferable skills, including the ability to build consensus with multiple constituents, community organizing, and group facilitation. These skills foster productive conversations between various work groups and organizations to achieve common goals and improve engagement among stakeholders. Organizations and industries also recognize social workers as innovators, organizers, implementers, and leaders. They are trained to work on a micro level while also being able to see the “whole picture” of social problems from a macro level. They learn to work with a multitude of populations in various types of organizations, including private, nonprofit, and public sectors (such as international, federal, state, and municipal governments). The common thread that ties their work to multiple populations is grounded in a strong foundation of equity, justice, and inclusion.

Some of the job titles you may encounter when researching nontraditional social work jobs include:

- Community outreach coordinator in a bank
- Community engagement specialist in a philanthropic organization/foundation
- Sports social worker for a professional basketball team
- Dean of diversity and inclusion in higher education
- Director of corporate responsibility for a high-tech corporation
- Corporate social worker
- Learning enhancement specialist
- Employee assistance program (or EAP) counselor
- Community outreach specialist
- Conflict mediator
- Military social worker in the U.S. Navy
- Career coach at a consulting firm

Some of the knowledge areas and skills that a social worker in a nontraditional role needs to know include:

- Clinical social work
- Communication, counseling, problem solving, goal setting
- Community outreach
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Familiarity with employee assistance programs
- Entrepreneurship
- Evaluation
- Financial literacy
- Mediation/dispute resolution
- Mental health counseling
- Mitigation
- Negotiation
- Research/assessment
- Social enterprise

- Social responsibility
- Training and education
- Wellness

For a more comprehensive list of nontraditional social work skills, see Appendix A. Box 1.5 features a nontraditional social work job description, demonstrating how skills and knowledge help define a job title.

Box 1.5

Sample Nontraditional Social Work Job Description: Assistant Dean of Students, Adeline University

Job Description

Under the direction of the dean of students, serves as an impartial facilitator in supporting, and in some cases resolving, undergraduate student academic, personal welfare, and financial matters. These concerns are often of a sensitive nature and may not have a formal avenue of redress through official university channels. The assistant dean of students interacts with various campus departments and community-based agencies, as well as with faculty, staff, and student guardian/family members.

Responsibilities

- Supervise due process procedures and assist the dean of students with the resolution of student conduct concerns, Title IX investigations, and disciplinary processes
- Manage and resolve crisis situations involving undergraduate and graduate students, including student care and high-level conduct/Title IX cases
- Serve as a member of university committees related to student welfare, enrollment management, academic affairs, and other aspects related to student status
- Work collaboratively in the development and execution of new student orientation programs, including creating training modules around sexual assault and academic honesty
- Participate as a resource in the decisions and enforcement of academic probation/dismissal regulations as well as extension of academic deadlines on unfinished coursework and the rescheduling of final exams
- Interview and counsel students contemplating withdrawal, leave of absence, or readmission from the university in collaboration with deans of schools/colleges
- Assist students in understanding their rights and responsibilities as community members and the university conduct system
- Stay current with changes in rules, regulations, and policies as they relate to the student experience
- Serve as a resource to the university community regarding status of students and make presentations to groups

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- Supervise administrative support staff and graduate assistants working in the dean of students' office

Qualifications, Required

- Master's degree in college student affairs, higher education administration, guidance and counseling, or related
- At least three years postsecondary experience in professional student affairs/student development work
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and counseling skills, including conflict resolution and the ability to establish strong working relationships with faculty, staff, and others
- Demonstrated ability to exercise independent and sound analytical/diagnostic judgments
- Flexibility to manage complex roles, requiring a broad base of knowledge

Qualifications, Preferred

- Experience working with students who have experienced personal crisis and crime-related trauma, including sexual assault, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence
- Experience developing and presenting educational programming for students

Licensure for Nontraditional Clinical Social Work

While licensure for nontraditional social workers may not be necessary, it is a credential that protects the social worker and the client. Moreover, in some cases, it may be necessary depending on the funding of the position or organizational oversight.

CASE STUDY

Jing

Jing graduated with a MSW degree in macro social work with a focus on public health. Upon graduation, she was committed to working on improving the health outcomes of marginalized populations in the Seattle area. At a statewide public health organization, she worked on a variety of public health issues including obesity, substance use, and chronic disease management. In each position she utilized her macro social work skills in conducting needs assessments, creating effective programs, developing community partnerships, managing data, and creating relationships with state legislators to influence policy and legislation. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jing took advantage of the many new opportunities for macro social workers to make their contributions in nontraditional settings. Joining a biotech company specializing in the coordination of COVID testing, Jing's role as a strategy and innovation developer

allowed her to use her social justice lens to help ensure that these new systems, policies, and procedures were benefitting all individuals and communities. Drawing upon the community partnerships she had created previously, she was able to help the for-profit company understand how different systems interact and how individuals might work across or fall between different systems like schools, hospitals, and daycare centers. This knowledge helped allow for more effective testing. Jing shared her understanding of marginalized communities to create effective communication, outreach, and interventions to help individuals stay healthy.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have provided a landscape for you to explore your career path in the field of social work. We have discussed the three scopes of practice (macro, mezzo, and micro) and the five major areas of practice (generalist, clinical, macro, international, and nontraditional). We have provided sample skill sets and job titles, job descriptions, and case studies to help you better understand different career roles. As we continue our journey in the coming chapters, you will further explore your career options and assess your unique experiences, values, and skills to help you feel empowered to make informed career decisions.

CHAPTER TAKEAWAYS

- With a commitment to social justice, social workers work to improve the lives of the most vulnerable.
- The skills and knowledge gained through a social work job/education can be applied to many different work opportunities.
- Reflecting on your own interests and skills will help you determine the role in social work you want to play. Refer to Appendix A: Comprehensive List of Social Work Skills for a more in-depth review of the skills necessary for various areas of practice.