



WHAT IS SOCIAL WORK?

The profession of social work seeks to **improve the quality of life** for individuals and to **effect system-wide change** through the pursuit of social justice. Social work seeks to **help people overcome some of life's most difficult challenges**, especially the most vulnerable.

HOW IS SOCIAL WORK DIFFERENT FROM OTHER HELPING PROFESSIONS?

Social work uses a strength-based approach focusing on the person-in-environment model and its emphasis on social justice. In this approach, it is the role of the social worker to build upon an individual's or system's strengths, resources, supports, and skills. The profession of social work is varied, serving people young and old, from every walk of life, in a number of settings such as hospitals, schools, neighborhoods, and community organizations. It involves work with families, couples, groups, organizations, and communities. Social work is dedicated to the pursuit of social justice through direct service and through advocacy on the local, national, and global levels.

WHAT DO SOCIAL WORKERS DO?

Many social workers work directly with individuals, couples, families, or small groups. These social workers help clients cope with problems such as poverty, abuse, addiction, unemployment, educational problems, disability, trauma and mental illness. Social workers provide individual, family and group counseling, case management services connecting clients with resources and service providers, and other services to empower clients to meet their own needs.

Social workers often work within nonprofit organizations, schools, hospitals and government agencies working toward the common good. These social workers may work directly with individual clients or be involved in program development, program evaluation, and human services management. Many social workers choose to work with communities, organizations or governments to address social problems on a systems level. These workers advocate for vulnerable populations, fighting to end the inequalities and injustices they see in their communities. They engage in legislative advocacy, policy analysis, and community organizing to break down barriers and drive reform.

—Adapted from *socialworkguide.org*

UNIQUE FEATURES OF OUR BASW PROGRAM

As you work to earn your Bachelor of Arts in Social Work degree, you will benefit from:

- Personalized field placements/internships with local agencies and programs focusing on generalist social work practice. *No need to find your own placement/internship!*
- Preparation for beginning generalist social work practice, with courses in human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy, social work practice, research, and field instruction.
- Interactive and small classes. Most upper-level social work courses have fewer than 25 students per course. Enjoy the feeling of a small school with all of the resources of a large university!
- Strong foundation in the liberal arts and social sciences.
- Faculty with a research focus in strengthening families and communities and advancing social justice for vulnerable populations.
- Opportunities for engagement in research, publication, and presentation with social work faculty.
- Honors courses and Honors options for students who are members of the Honors College.
- Study Abroad and Study Away options for general education courses.
- Active student groups, Phi-Alpha Honor Society.
- Professional advising with personalized attention to your educational needs and interests.
- Accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), with eligibility for advanced standing MSW programs.
- The School's BASW and MSW Programs have been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).



WHAT ELSE DOES THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK OFFER?

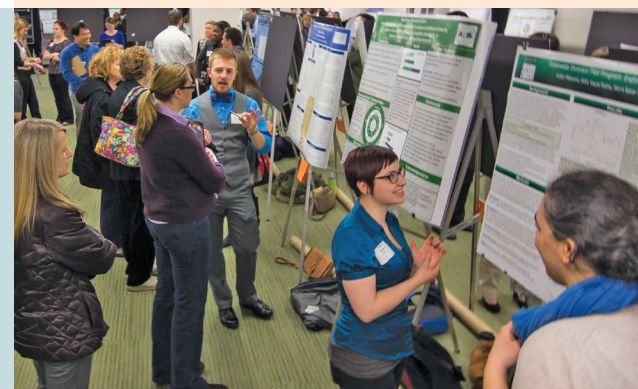
In addition to a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW), the program offers:

- A minor in Human Behavior and Social Services
- Six Certificate Programs with specialized field placements in the areas of:
 - Health and aging
 - Child welfare
 - Global social work
 - Law and policy
 - Children, youth, and families
 - Nonprofit administration
- Research Mentorship
- Study Abroad/Study Away Options.
- Earn both your BASW and MSW in five years, when paired with our Advanced Standing MSW Program



Reflection from a **BASW graduate**

“The thing I was most impacted by during my time in social work was the sense of community and belonging. It was wonderful to be around smart and creative people who had the same passions that I did. I learned so much from my fellow classmates, and we all supported and pushed each other to help people in need.” —Ali



CAREERS IN SOCIAL WORK

Examples of **employers and career paths** of MSU BASW graduates

- Public and private child welfare agencies in areas such as adoption, foster care, and child and adult protection.
- Local community mental health agencies focusing on substance abuse, work with disabilities, mental health, and family advocacy and education
- Local community and neighborhood associations such as YMCA, Allen Neighborhood Center, Southside Community Center
- Outreach programs such as Volunteers of America, American Red Cross, Lansing Area Aids Network, United Way, and the Boys and Girls Club.
- Judicial, court and legal work such as probation, parole, Friend of the Court, juvenile court, child and family advocacy
- Service-based experiences such as Teach for America, Peace Corps, Americorps, and City Year.
- Health-based fields such as home care, palliative care, hospitals, and health departments
- Community agencies and policy organizations working in research, public policy, grant writing, analysis, budgeting, program planning, and evaluation
- Policy, advocacy and lobbying agencies as a policy analyst, community organizer, researcher, or lobbyist
- Large businesses and corporations in employee assistance programs, human resources and public relations



Job titles a bachelor's-level social worker might hold:

- Adoption Specialist
- Case Manager
- Caseworker
- Child and Family Advocate
- Child Protective Services Worker
- Client Education Specialist
- Community Advocate
- Community Organizer
- Court Liaison
- Foster Care Worker
- Health Coordinator
- Hospital Liaison
- Intake and Assessment Assistant
- Mental Health Aide
- Policy Analyst
- Policy Assistant
- Probation Officer
- Program Evaluator
- Program Manager
- Wellness Promotion
- Youth Worker



THE SOCIAL WORK ADVANTAGE

Social work in Michigan is a **licensed health profession**.

Upon graduation, you will be eligible to begin your licensed health profession in Michigan. Over 95% of our students are employed or begin a graduate program within three months of graduation!

If your goal is to become a therapist, your next step is to begin an MSW program. Typically, an MSW program takes two years. With a strong GPA and a BASW from a CSWE-accredited school, you may be eligible to complete your MSW in as few as 10 months!

THINKING OF **GRADUATE SCHOOL?**

A BASW degree plus a Master's in Social Work (MSW) is the fastest route to becoming a licensed social worker who can practice therapy. Our students go on to grad school for this purpose, plus to become skilled in research, public health, program management, community organizing, social policy, and more. Secondary degrees include those in social work, law, education, public health, public policy, public administration, and business administration. An MSW is the most common graduate degree that our students move on to.



Examples of **graduate schools** attended by our BASW graduates

- Michigan State University
- University of Michigan
- Jane Adams College of Social Work
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Case Western Reserve University
- University of Southern California
- University of Chicago
- Columbia
- University of Illinois
- Hunter College
- University of Washington

Reflection from a **recent BASW graduate**

“My academic experience at MSU was outstanding. I picked social work as a major because I was passionate about social change. What I didn't expect was to be able to work with a professor, do undergraduate research, have an internship selected for me, publish a paper, and present at a conference! I had such a personalized academic experience and small classes within social work inside such a giant university. I got into my dream school for my MSW program, and even 2,500 miles away from Michigan, people are excited about me being from MSU! GO GREEN!” —Ashley

