

## A QUICK COMPARISON BETWEEN A SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER AND A SOCIAL WORKER

Resource material: BC Work Futures [www.workfutures.bc.ca](http://www.workfutures.bc.ca)  
 Labour Market Information [www.labourmarketinformation.ca](http://www.labourmarketinformation.ca)  
 BC Association of Social Workers [www.bcasw.org](http://www.bcasw.org)  
 BC College of Social Workers [www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca](http://www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca)  
 Canadian Council of Social Development [www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)

SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER	SOCIAL WORKER
<p><b><u>Nature of Work</u></b>            Social Service Workers are paraprofessionals. They administer and implement a variety of social assistance programs and community services. They assist clients in better managing their personal and social problems.</p> <p>They are employed by social service and government agencies, mental health agencies, group homes, school boards, women support agencies, youth services, and other establishments.</p>	<p><b><u>Nature of Work</u></b>            Social workers are professionals. They help individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations develop the skills and resources they need to enhance social functioning. Social Workers are advocates, counsellors, policy analysts, administrators, activists, facilitators, mediators, organizers, and researchers.</p> <p>They are employed by hospitals, school boards, social service agencies, child welfare organizations, correctional facilities, community agencies, employee assistance programs, and Aboriginal band councils, or may pursue private practice.</p>
<p><b><u>A Few Typical Occupations</u></b>            Addictions Worker            Community Service Worker            Crisis Intervention Worker            Special Educational Assistant            Teacher Assistant            Financial Assistance Worker            Youth Worker            Rehabilitation Assistant            Mental Health Worker            Group Home Worker            Aboriginal Outreach Worker            Family Service Worker</p>	<p><b><u>A Few Typical Occupations</u></b>            Substance Abuse Counsellor            Social Worker            Child Welfare/Protection Worker            School Social Worker            Psychiatric Social Worker            Social Work Supervisor            Case Management Officer            Medical Social Worker            Forensic Social Worker            Group/Family Therapist            Case Manager            Clinical Social Worker            Private Practitioner</p>

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<p><b><u>Typical Duties</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview clients to obtain case history and background information</li> <li>• Assist clients to determine options and develop plans of action, while providing support and assistance</li> <li>• Assist clients in locating and utilizing community resources including housing, employment, transportation, daycare, and other referral services</li> <li>• Meet with clients to assess their progress, give support ,and discuss difficulties</li> <li>• Assist in evaluating the effectiveness of treatment programs by tracking client’s behavioural changes and responses to interventions</li> <li>• Work with clients living in group homes, recovery facilities, and transition houses, monitor their activities and assist in pre-release and release planning</li> <li>• Maintain program statistics for purposes of evaluation and research</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Typical Duties</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview clients and makes assessments to determine what actions/services are necessary</li> <li>• Provide counselling and therapy to enhance clients’ insight into their personal problems and to develop their clients’ coping skills</li> <li>• Develop strategies of assistance for clients, including obtaining legal aid, financial assistance, housing, and medical treatment from appropriate agencies</li> <li>• Investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect, and enforce protective measures as needed</li> <li>• Provide mediation services and develop prevention and intervention programs to meet the specific needs of both the client and the community</li> <li>• Perform discharge planning and advocate for client groups in the community, including lobbying for remedies to problems that have a direct impact on those client groups</li> <li>• Conduct research and assess the usefulness of social programs in the community</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>General Skill Requirements</u></b></p> <p>Social Service Workers require strong oral communication skills and an interest in working with others. Tasks include problem solving, job task planning and organizing, writing, reading text, document use, critical thinking, decision-making, continuous learning.</p>	<p><b><u>General Skill Requirements</u></b></p> <p>Social workers require empathy and should be able to establish rapport with a wide range of people. At times, they require mediation and negotiation skills. Technical skills in the area of child protection and an awareness of the needs of people with physical and mental disabilities in social service settings are vital. For more advanced positions, supervisory and management skills are needed.</p>
<p><b><u>Wages and Salaries (2008)</u></b></p> <p>Low Wage: \$14.64 (Bottom 10%)  Average Wage: \$20.27 (Average of remaining 80%)  High Wage: \$25.95 (Top 10%)</p>	<p><b><u>Wages and Salaries (2008)</u></b></p> <p>Low Wage: \$17.70 (Bottom 10%)  Average Wage: \$27.75 (Average of remaining 80%)  High Wage: \$36.70 (Top 10%)</p>

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<p><b><u>Employment Prospects</u></b>            Job prospects in BC are expected to be <b>average</b> in upcoming years. New jobs will be created to address the needs of the growing population of elderly persons, people with physical and mental disabilities, homeless persons and those with substance abuse problems. Growth is also expected in the area of First Nations outreach and community development, especially for youth.</p> <p>There is an increasing demand for workers with good credentials and higher skill levels</p>	<p><b><u>Employment Prospects</u></b>            Job prospects for workers in BC are expected to be <b>above average</b>. Social work is changing and new job opportunities will continue to emerge. There will also be a significant number of job openings due to retirements. Our aging population will create employment in gerontology. As well, with hospitals emphasizing and “early discharge” of patients, there will be a need for in-house social workers to coordinate discharge planning. Generally, there is a growing demand for those with clinical specialties. Plus, a rise in corporate employee assistance programs and training seminars will contribute to an increase in contract work in this field.</p>
<p><b><u>Career Paths</u></b>            Recent graduates are typically accepted into entry-level jobs in youth care and residential care. With additional education, training, and experience, social service workers may progress to professional and supervisory positions, such as social workers, family and other related counselors, or probation and parole officers. Highly experienced workers may also become coordinators, outreach workers, or work in management.</p>	<p><b><u>Career Paths</u></b>            Recent graduates primarily obtain front-line positions in child protection and health care. It is possible for social workers to specialize in areas such as child welfare, family services, corrections, gerontology, mental health or addictions. Social workers with experience and further education may progress to supervisory or administrative positions, or they may become case managers or policy analysts.</p> <p>Social Workers with graduate degrees (MSW) have the option to pursue social planning or research activities, and those with doctorates sometimes take faculty positions in colleges and universities, where they teach or conduct research.</p>