

OCTOBER 2018

FACT SHEET

Social Workers in North Dakota

Social workers are licensed professionals working in various human service-related fields with the objective of helping families and individuals improve their lives.

Licensed independent clinical social workers (LICSW) can provide assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, conditions, and addictions. They can work in a private practice setting. Licensed certified social workers (LCSWs) provide assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, physical, emotional, and behavioral disorders, conditions, and addictions. Licensed social workers (LSWs) provide numerous services, including helping their clients access government benefits, working with children in foster care, and arranging resources for people involved in the legal system, among others.

The tiered system for behavioral health professionals in North Dakota is a basic ranking of behavioral health professionals based on their scope of practice, with tier 1 being the highest rank and tier 4 being the lowest rank. While licensed social workers are not included in the tiered system, licensed certified social workers are a tier 3 behavioral health professional and licensed independent clinical social workers are a tier 2a behavioral health professional.

Education of Social Workers in North Dakota

Social workers must have a degree in social work from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited degree program. LSWs must have a bachelor's degree, while LCSWs and LICSWs must have a master's degree or higher. Schools in North Dakota with bachelor degree programs include the University of North Dakota (CSWE accredited), North Dakota State University (dual degree in Human Development and Family Science from NDSU and BSW from MiSU), the University of Mary (CSWE accredited), and Minot State University (CSWE accredited). The University of North Dakota is the only school in North Dakota with a master's degree program in social work that is CSWE accredited.

Licensure Criteria for Licensed Social Workers

- Possess a baccalaureate degree in social work from a college or university.
- Pass an examination approved by the North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners.

- Agree to adhere to the code of social work ethics adopted by the North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners.

Licensure Criteria for Licensed Certified Social Workers

- Have a doctorate or master's degree in social work from a college or university.
- Pass an examination approved by the North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners.
- Agree to adhere to the code of social work ethics adopted by the Board.

Licensure Criteria for Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers

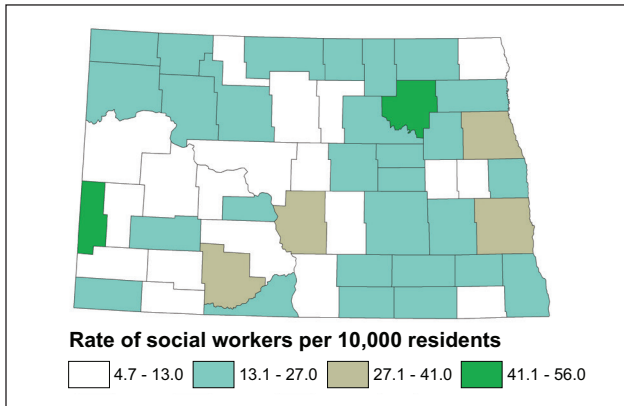
- Possess a doctorate or master's degree in social work from an approved social work program.
- Pass an examination approved by the Board.
- Successfully complete 3,000 hours of supervised post-master's clinical social work experience within four years.
- The initial 1,500 hours of post-master's clinical social work experience must be under the supervision of a clinical social worker.
- Agree to adhere to the code of social work ethics adopted by the North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners, be of good moral character, and pay all applicable fees specified by the North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners.

Statistics of Social Workers in North Dakota

- As of 2018, North Dakota had 2,349 licensed social workers.
- A majority (67.8%, 1,592) were licensed social workers (LSWs), 17.2% (404) were licensed certified social workers (LCSWs), and the remaining 15.0% (353) were licensed independent clinical social workers.
- The majority of LSWs in North Dakota (98.6%, 1,200) had a bachelor's degree, while 1.4% (17) held a master's degree.
- Most LCSWs (96.0%, 289) in North Dakota held a master's degree, with 3.3% (10) having a bachelor's degree. Only two (0.7%) held a doctoral degree.

- Among LICSWs, 98.5% (254) held a master’s degree, three (1.2%) held a bachelor’s degree, and one (0.3%) held a doctoral degree.
- On average, social workers in the state were out of school for 13 years and 5 months.

Figure 1. Rate of Social Workers Per 10,000 Residents in North Dakota



- Most social workers practiced in the eastern part of North Dakota (Figure 1).
- About 64.4% (908) of LSWs and 72.0% (257) of LCSWs worked in urban settings while 66.9% (216) of LICSWs worked in urban areas.
- In total, 65.1% (1211) of all professional social workers in North Dakota worked in urban areas.
- With regard to location, 19.0% (354) of all social workers were in large rural areas, 11.2% (208) worked in isolated rural areas, and 4.7% (88) worked in small rural areas.

Table 1. Region of Primary Workplace for Social Work Professionals in North Dakota

Region	LSWs %	LCSWs %	LICSWs %	All %
Northwest	3.5	2.3	6.1	3.6
North Central	11.6	7.5	14.0	11.3
Lake Region	5.8	5.2	6.1	5.7
Northeast	12.7	19.9	16.2	14.4
Southeast	29.4	35.0	35.2	31.2
South Central	5.7	6.2	3.8	5.5
West Central	27.4	20.6	14.4	24.5
Badlands	3.9	3.3	4.2	3.8

- Most social workers were located in the southeast or west central regions of the state (Table 1).

- The northwest region of the state had the fewest number of social workers.

Conclusion

- A graduate with a bachelor’s degree in social work can start to practice as a social worker in North Dakota as long as they have been licensed.
- In North Dakota, a social worker may start practicing privately or clinically after earning a master’s degree in social work and passing the Association of Social Work Boards examination. After acquiring two years of experience, they may apply to become licensed independent clinical social workers.
- Most social workers are located in the eastern part of the state.

Data

- North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners. (2018). Licensure file. Retrieved from www.ndbswe.com/.