

## Community and Social Services

### Medical and Public Health Social Workers

**Medical and Public Health Social Workers** work with people who are living with or affected by chronic, acute or terminal illnesses, such as Alzheimer's disease, cancer or HIV/AIDS, in order to provide psychological services, social support, and counseling. They often play a direct role in advising or collaborating with family members or other caregivers, counseling patients on self-care, and planning for needs after release from a hospital. Medical and public health social workers may work for hospitals, nursing and personal care facilities, individual and family services agencies, or local governments. In some instances, they are part of a team of social service providers focusing on a particular health issue or population.

Although work in this area can be very rewarding, it also can be very emotionally draining. Social workers in this area need to plan for and develop supports for their own stress management and emotional well-being. Although medical and public health social workers work weekday business hours, they may need to be available at nights or on weekends, to accommodate client schedules. Travel for home visits or travel to and from different medical facilities or nursing homes is sometimes required.

### Education/Training

*How to Obtain:*

A bachelor's degree is the minimum requirement for entry into the occupation, but some positions require an advanced degree, typically a Master's in Social Work (MSW).

New York and all other states also have licensing boards. Licenses are not necessarily required for all positions, or for entry and training, but are typically required for advancement. License requirements in most states commonly include:

- a written examination,
- continuing education, or
- 1-3 years of experience.

The requirements for a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in New York include:

- statement of moral character
- 21 years of age
- A Masters in Social Work
- 12 hours of clinical coursework

- 3 years of supervised experience
- a written examination

Some more specialized credentials involving continuing education, though not necessarily mandatory, may be helpful for advancement after initial licensing, and are available through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

*More Information on Licensing:*

- Directory of state licensing boards:  
<https://www.datapathdesign.com/ASWB/Laws/Prod/cgi-bin/LawBoardWebsitedll.dll/EXEC/0/0ygtpd30za0u3g1eyif1b115x868>
- New York State licensing information: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/sw/>
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW):  
<http://www.socialworkers.org/credentials/default.asp>

*Average Costs:*

Tuition and fees for a master's degree earned in the social and behavior sciences, such as a Master's in Social Work (MSW), costs an average of \$10,900\* per year. Completion time is generally 2 years.

Licensure and certification occurs at the state level: Costs vary by state, ranging from \$40-\$500

The cost in New York State is approximately \$300, plus the cost of any exam study aids.

Costs of continuing education vary.

\*Note: This figure does not include federal, state, or university financial aid resources such as grants, fellowships, scholarships or work study. It also does not include vocational rehabilitation or other state resources available specifically to people with disabilities. The out-of-pocket expense may be significantly less.