

Social Assistance, Except Child Daycare

(NAICS 624, except 6244)

SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- About 2 out of 3 jobs are in professional and service occupations.
- Job opportunities in social assistance should be numerous through the year 2012.
- Average earnings are low because of the large number of part-time and low-paying service jobs.

Nature of the Industry

Careers in social assistance appeal to persons with a strong desire to make life better and easier for others. Workers in this industry usually are good communicators and enjoy interacting with people. Social assistance establishments provide a wide array of services that include helping the homeless, counseling troubled and emotionally disturbed individuals, training the unemployed or underemployed, and helping the needy to obtain financial assistance. About 55,000 establishments in the private sector provided social assistance in 2002. Thousands of other establishments, mainly in State and local government, provided additional social assistance. (For information about government social assistance, see the *Career Guide* statements on Federal Government, and State and local government, excluding education and hospitals.)

Social assistance consists of four segments—individual and family services; community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services; vocational rehabilitation services; and child daycare services. The child daycare services segment, including daycare and preschool care centers, is covered in a separate *Career Guide* statement.

Individual and family services establishments are primarily engaged in providing nonresidential social assistance for children, the elderly, or persons with mental or physical disabilities. Services provided for children may include adoption and foster care, drug prevention, life skills training, and positive social development. Services also are provided to the elderly and persons with disabilities through adult daycare, nonmedical home care or homemaker services, social activities, group support, and companionship.

Community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services establishments provide various types of assistance to members of the community. Community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services is further divided into three sectors: Community food services, community housing services, and emergency and other relief services.

Establishments in the *community food services* subsector collect, prepare, and deliver food for the needy. Establishments in this industry may also distribute clothing and blankets to the poor. These establishments may prepare and deliver meals to persons who by reason of age, disability, or illness are unable to prepare meals for themselves; collect and distribute salvageable or donated food; or prepare and provide meals at fixed or mobile locations. Food banks, meal delivery programs, and soup kitchens are included in this industry.

Establishments in the *community housing services* sector provide short-term emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse. Also included in this sector are establishments that provide transitional housing for low-income individuals and families as well as temporary residential shelter for the homeless, runaway youths, and patients and families caught in medical crises. Community housing establishments also perform volunteer construction or repair of low-cost housing, in partnership with the homeowner who may assist in construction or repair work and repair of homes for elderly or disabled homeowners. These establishments may operate their own shelter or may provide subsidized housing using existing homes,

Establishments in the *emergency and other relief services* sector provide food, shelter, clothing, medical relief, resettlement, and counseling to victims of domestic or international disasters or conflicts.

Vocational rehabilitation services establishments provide vocational rehabilitation or life skills services, such as job counseling, job training, and work experience, to unemployed and underemployed persons, persons with disabilities, and persons who have a job market disadvantage because of lack of education, job skills, or experience. Vocational rehabilitation job training facilities and sheltered workshops, such as work experience centers, are included in this industry.

Working Conditions

Some social assistance establishments operate around the clock. Thus, evening, weekend, and holiday work is common. Some establishments may be understaffed, resulting in large caseloads for each worker. Jobs in voluntary, nonprofit agencies often are part time.

Some workers spend a substantial amount of time traveling within the local area. For example, home health and personal care aides routinely visit clients in their homes; social workers and social and human service assistants also may make home visits. In 2002, the incidence rate for occupational injury and illness in social assistance varied by industry sector. Compared with the rate of 5.3 per 100 full-time workers for the entire private sector, individual and family services had a rate of 4.5 and other social services had a rate of 3.7.

Employment

Social assistance provided 1.3 million nongovernment wage and salary jobs in 2002. About 60 percent were in individual and family services (table 1).

Table 1. Employment of nongovernment wage and salary workers in social assistance, except child day care, by detailed industry, 2002
(Employment in thousands)

Industry segment	2002 employment		2002-2012 percent change
	Number	Percent	
Total, social services, except childcare	1,269.3	100.0	45.6
Individual and family services	767.4	60.5	45.6
Vocational rehabilitation services	376.3	29.6	49.5
Community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services	125.6	9.9	49.0

In 2002, about 73 percent of social assistance establishments employed fewer than 20 workers; however, larger establishments accounted for most jobs (see chart).

Social assistance workers were somewhat older than workers in other industries (table 2). About 43 percent were 45 years old or older, compared with 38 percent of all workers. Jobs in social assistance are concentrated in large States with heavily populated urban areas, such as New York and California.

Table 2. Percent distribution of employment in social assistance, except child day care, by age group, 2002

Age group	Social services	All industries
Total	100.0	100.0
16 to 24	10.5	14.7
25 to 34	23.1	21.6
35 to 44	23.8	26.3
45 to 54	24.6	22.9
55 to 64	13.6	11.4
65 and older	4.4	3.2

Occupations in the Industry

More than one-third of nongovernment social assistance jobs are in professional and related occupations (table 3). *Social workers* counsel and assess the needs of clients, refer them to the appropriate sources of help, and monitor their progress. They may specialize in child welfare and family services, mental health, medical social work, school social work, community organization activities, or clinical social work. *Social and human service assistants* work in a variety of social and human service delivery settings. Job titles and duties of these workers vary, but they include human service worker, case management aide, social work assistant, mental health aide, child abuse worker, community outreach worker, and gerontology aide. *Counselors* help people evaluate their interests and abilities, and advise and assist them with personal and social problems.

Almost one-third of employment in the social assistance industry is in many of the service occupations. *Personal and home care aides* help elderly, disabled, and ill persons live in their own homes, instead of in an institution, by providing routine personal care services. Although some are employed by public or private agencies, many are self-employed. Persons in *food preparation and serving related occupations* serve residents at social assistance institutions. *Home health aides*

provide health-related services for ill, injured, disabled, or elderly individuals in their homes.

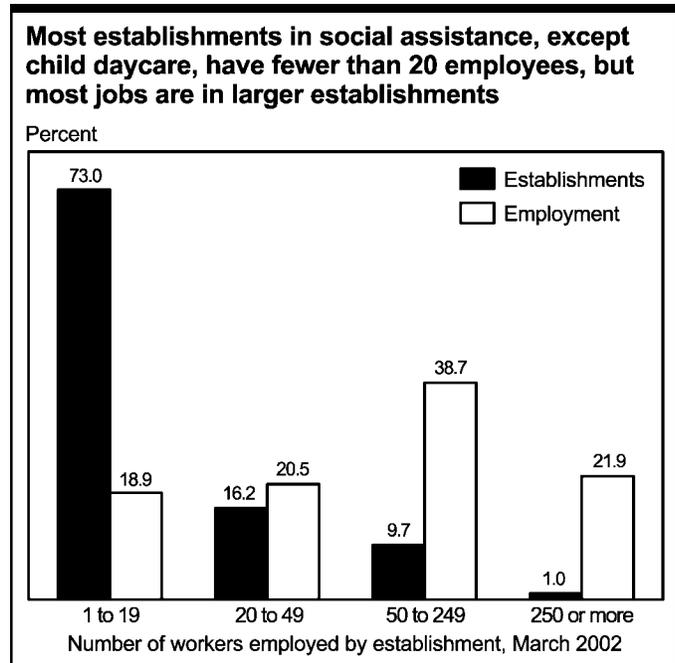
As in most industries, office and administrative support workers—secretaries and bookkeepers, for example—as well as managers account for many jobs. However, social assistance employs a much smaller percentage of production; installation, maintenance, and repair; and sales jobs than does the economy as a whole.

Certain occupations are more heavily concentrated in some segments of the industry than in others. Individual and family services, for example, employs the greatest numbers of social workers, social and human service assistants, and personal and home care aides. Vocational rehabilitation services provides the most jobs for adult literacy and remedial and self-enrichment education teachers.

Training and Advancement

Some occupations in social assistance have very specific entrance requirements. These include most of the professional and related occupations. Those requiring specific clinical training, such as clinical social workers and clinical psychologists, also require appropriate State licensure or certification. Nevertheless, people with a limited background in social assistance or little education beyond high school can find a job in the industry. Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants; home health aides; and personal and home care aides are some of these occupations. Many establishments provide on-the-job or classroom training, especially for those with limited background or training.

Many employers prefer social and human service assistants with some related work experience or college courses in human services, social work, or one of the social or behavioral sciences. Other employers prefer an associate degree or a bachelor's degree in human services or social work. A number of employers provide in-service training, such as seminars and workshops.



Entry-level jobs for social workers require a bachelor's degree in social work or in an undergraduate major such as psychology or sociology. However, most agencies require a master's degree in social work or a closely related field. Public agencies and private practice clinics that offer clinical or consultative services

Table 3. Employment of wage and salary workers in social assistance, except child day care, by occupation, 2002 and projected change, 2002-12
(Employment in thousands)

Industry segment	2002 employment		2002-2012 percent change
	Number	Percent	
All occupations	1,269	100.0	47.1
Management, business, and financial occupations	145	11.4	46.6
Top executives	31	2.4	43.0
Operations specialties managers	18	1.4	47.3
Social and community service managers	31	2.4	45.2
Human resources, training, and labor relations specialists	20	1.6	49.2
Professional and related occupations	443	34.9	53.4
Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors	13	1.0	38.0
Educational, vocational, and school counselors	19	1.5	41.0
Mental health counselors	17	1.3	43.1
Rehabilitation counselors	45	3.5	50.5
Social workers	81	6.4	48.0
Social and human service assistants ..	88	6.9	78.9
Primary, secondary, and special education teachers	22	1.7	37.6
Other teachers and instructors	23	1.8	57.5
Teacher assistants	21	1.6	40.0
Registered nurses	14	1.1	44.4
Service occupations	391	30.8	51.5
Home health aides	79	6.2	40.4
Cooks and food preparation workers ...	19	1.5	30.8
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners ...	27	2.1	44.0
Child care workers	24	1.9	43.6
Personal and home care aides	146	11.5	67.8
Recreation workers	16	1.3	43.2
Sales and related occupations	18	1.4	43.2
Office and administrative support occupations	164	12.9	25.2
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	17	1.3	24.5
Receptionists and information clerks ..	17	1.3	45.2
Secretaries and administrative assistants	44	3.5	19.4
Office clerks, general	34	2.7	27.8
Production occupations	34	2.7	42.4
Transportation and material moving occupations	62	4.9	35.9
Motor vehicle operators	31	2.4	38.4
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	21	1.7	27.2

NOTE: May not add to totals due to omission of occupations with small employment.

require an advanced degree in clinical social work; supervisory, administrative, and staff training positions usually require at least a master's degree.

Volunteering with a student, religious, or charitable organization is a good way for persons to test their interest in social assistance, and may provide an advantage when applying for jobs in this industry.

Advancement paths vary. For example, some personal and home care aides as well as some nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants, and home health aides get additional training and become licensed practical nurses. Formal education—usually a bachelor's or master's degree in counseling, human services, rehabilitation, social work, or a related field—almost always is necessary in order for social and human service assistants to advance. Social workers with an advanced degree and the appropriate license can advance to supervisor, program manager, assistant director, or executive director of an agency or department. They also may enter private practice and provide psychotherapeutic counseling and other services on a contract basis.

Earnings

Earnings in selected occupations in the social assistance, except child daycare industry in 2002 appear in table 4. As in most industries, professionals and managers—whose salaries reflect higher education levels, broader experience, and greater responsibility—commonly earn more than other workers.

Average earnings in the social assistance industry are lower than the average for all industries, as shown in table 5.

About 15 percent of workers in the social assistance industry were union members or were covered by union contracts in 2002, about the same as workers throughout all industries.

Outlook

Job opportunities in social assistance should be numerous through the year 2012. The number of nongovernment wage and salary jobs is expected to increase 47 percent, compared with only 16 percent for all industries combined. Expected growth rates for the various segments of the industry are 46 percent in individual and family services, 49 percent in vocational rehabilitation services, and 49 percent in community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services over the 2002-12 period. In addition to those arising from employment growth, many job openings will stem from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or stop working.

Projected job growth is due mostly to the expansion of services for the elderly and the aging baby-boom generation. Similarly, services for the mentally ill, the physically disabled, and families in crisis will be expanded. Increasing emphasis on providing home care services rather than more costly nursing home or hospital care, and on earlier and better integration of the physically disabled and mentally ill into society, also will contribute to employment growth in the social assistance industry, as will increased demand for drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs. Employment in private social service agencies may be spurred as State and local governments contract out their social services in an effort to cut costs. The expan-

Table 4. Median hourly earnings of the largest occupations in social assistance, except child day care, 2002

Occupation	Individual and family services	Community food and housing and emergency and other relief services	Vocational rehabilitation services	All Industries
Registered nurses	\$20.54	—	\$21.88	\$23.12
Mental health and substance abuse social workers	15.05	13.30	—	15.79
Child, family, and school social workers	14.02	12.89	13.63	15.94
Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors	13.64	13.73	—	14.51
All other counselors, social and religious workers	13.14	11.94	12.50	14.98
Rehabilitation counselors	11.88	12.03	11.89	12.43
Social and human service assistants	10.68	10.50	10.23	11.24
Preschool teachers, except special education	9.99	—	9.09	9.26
Personal and home care aides	8.12	8.07	8.40	7.81
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	7.80	8.39	7.66	8.77

sion and creation of employment in the social assistance industry may depend, in large part, on the amount of funding made available by the government and managed-care organizations.

Some of the fastest growing occupations in the Nation are concentrated in social assistance. Compared with industry growth of 47 percent, the number of home health aides within social assistance is projected to grow 40 percent between 2002 and 2012. The number of social and human service assistants is expected to grow 79 percent, and that of personal and home care aides 68 percent. Overall employment of social workers will continue to grow, but not as rapidly as that of social and human service assistants.

Table 5. Average earnings of nonsupervisory workers in social assistance, 2002

Industry segment	Weekly	Hourly
All private industry	\$506	\$14.95
Social assistance	319	10.54
Community housing, emergency, and relief services	383	12.06
Individual and family services	354	11.43
Vocational rehabilitation services	305	10.34
Community food services	302	10.62

Sources of Additional Information

For information about careers in social work and voluntary credentials for social workers, contact:

- National Association of Social Workers, 750 First St. NE., Suite 700, Washington, DC 20002-4241.
Internet: <http://www.socialworkers.org>

For information on programs and careers in human services, contact:

- Council for Standards in Human Services Education, Harrisburg Area Community College, Human Services Program, One HACC Dr., Harrisburg, PA 17110-2999.
Internet: <http://www.cshse.org>

State employment service offices also may be able to provide information on job opportunities in social assistance.

Information on many occupations in social assistance, including the following, may be found in the 2004-05 *Occupational Outlook Handbook*:

- Counselors
- Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides
- Personal and home care aides
- Social and human service assistants
- Social workers
- Teachers—adult literacy and remedial and self-enrichment education