

## Social and Human Service Assistants

### Summary



Social and human service assistants help clients to identify and obtain benefits and services.

Quick Facts: Social and Human Service Assistants	
<b>2014 Median Pay</b>	\$29,790 per year \$14.32 per hour
<b>Typical Entry-Level Education</b>	High school diploma or equivalent
<b>Work Experience in a Related Occupation</b>	None
<b>On-the-job Training</b>	Short-term on-the-job training
<b>Number of Jobs, 2014</b>	386,600
<b>Job Outlook, 2014-24</b>	11% (Faster than average)
<b>Employment Change, 2014-24</b>	44,200

### What Social and Human Service Assistants Do

Social and human service assistants provide client services, including support for families, in a wide variety of fields, such as psychology, rehabilitation, and social work. They assist other workers, such as [social workers](#), and they help clients find benefits or community services.

### Work Environment

Social and human service assistants work for nonprofit organizations, for-profit social service agencies, and state and local governments. They generally work full time, and some work nights and weekends.

### How to Become a Social and Human Service Assistant

Requirements for social and human service assistants vary, although they typically have at least a high school diploma and must complete a brief period of on-the-job training. Some employers prefer to hire workers who have additional education or experience.

### Pay

The median hourly wage for social and human service assistants was \$14.32 in May 2014.

## [Job Outlook](#)

Employment of social and human service assistants is projected to grow 11 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. There should be good job prospects, because low pay and heavy workloads cause many workers to leave this occupation.

## [State & Area Data](#)

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for social and human service assistants.

## [Similar Occupations](#)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of social and human service assistants with similar occupations.

## [More Information, Including Links to O\\*NET](#)

Learn more about social and human service assistants by visiting additional resources, including O\*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

# **What Social and Human Service Assistants Do**

---



Social and human service assistants help the elderly to stay in their own homes and under their own care whenever possible.

Social and human service assistants provide client services, including support for families, in a wide variety of fields, such as psychology, rehabilitation, and social work. They assist other workers, such as [social workers](#), and they help clients find benefits or community services.

## **Duties**

---

Social and human service assistants typically do the following:

- Help determine what type of aid their clients need
- Work with clients and other professionals, such as social workers, to develop a treatment plan
- Help clients find assistance with daily activities, such as eating and bathing
- Research services, such as food stamps and Medicaid, that are available to their clients in their communities

- Coordinate services provided to clients
- Help clients complete paperwork to apply for assistance programs
- Transport clients—for example, by driving them to appointments or to services within their community
- Check in with clients to ensure that services are provided appropriately

Social and human service assistants have many job titles, including *case work aide*, *clinical social work aide*, *family service assistant*, *social work assistant*, *addictions counselor assistant*, and *human service worker*.

Social and human service assistants help clients to identify and obtain benefits and services. In addition to initially connecting clients with benefits or services, social and human service assistants may follow up with clients to ensure that they are receiving the intended services and that the services are meeting their needs. They work under the direction of social workers, [psychologists](#), or other social and human service workers.

With ***children and families***, social and human service assistants ensure that the children live in safe homes. They help parents get the resources, such as food stamps or childcare, they need to care for their children.

With the ***elderly***, these workers help clients stay in their own homes and live under their own care whenever possible. Social and human service assistants may coordinate meal deliveries or find [personal care aides](#) to help with the clients' day-to-day needs, such as running errands and bathing. In some cases, human service workers help look for residential care facilities, such as nursing homes.

For ***people with disabilities***, social and human service assistants help find rehabilitation services that aid their clients. They may work with employers to make a job more accessible to people with disabilities. Some workers find personal care services to help clients with daily living activities, such as bathing and making meals.

For ***people with addictions***, human service assistants find rehabilitation centers that meet their clients' needs. They also may find support groups for people who are dependent on alcohol, drugs, gambling, or other substances or behaviors.

With ***veterans***, assistants help people who have been discharged from the military adjust to civilian life. They help with practical needs, such as locating housing and finding ways to apply skills gained in the military to civilian jobs. They may also help their clients navigate the overwhelming number of services available to veterans.

For ***people with mental illnesses***, social and human service assistants help clients find the appropriate resources to help them cope with their illness. They find self-help and support groups to provide their clients with an assistance network. In addition, they may find personal care services or group housing to help those with more severe mental illnesses care for themselves.

With ***immigrants***, workers help clients adjust to living in a new country. They help the clients locate jobs and housing. They also may help them find programs that teach English, or they may find legal assistance to help immigrants get various administrative paperwork in order.

With ***former prison inmates***, human service assistants find job training or placement programs to help clients reenter society. Human service assistants help former inmates find housing and connect with programs that help them start a new life for themselves.

With ***homeless people***, assistants help clients meet their basic needs. They find temporary or permanent housing for their clients and locate places, such as soup kitchens, that provide meals. Human service assistants also may help homeless people find resources to address other problems they may have, such as joblessness.

## Work Environment

---



Social and human service assistants sometimes travel around their community to see clients.

Social and human service assistants held about 386,600 jobs in 2014. The industries that employed the most social and human service assistants were as follows:

Individual and family services	28%
State and local government, excluding education and hospitals	20
Nursing and residential care facilities	16
Community and vocational rehabilitation services	11
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations	8

They work for nonprofit organizations, private for-profit social service agencies, and state and local government. They may work in offices, clinics, hospitals, group homes, and shelters. Some travel around their communities to see clients.

## Work Schedules

---

Most social and human service assistants work full time. About 1 in 6 worked part time in 2014. Some work nights and weekends.

## How to Become a Social and Human Service Assistant

---



Social and human service assistants help determine what type of help their clients need.

Requirements for social and human service assistants vary, although they typically have at least a high school diploma and must complete a brief period of on-the-job training. Some employers prefer to hire workers who have additional education or experience.

## Education

---

Although a high school diploma is typically required, some employers prefer to hire workers who have relevant work experience or education beyond high school. A certificate or an associate's degree in a subject such as human services, gerontology (working with older adults), or social or behavioral science is common for workers entering this occupation.

Human service degree programs train students to observe and interview patients, carry out treatment plans, and handle people who are undergoing a crisis. Many programs include fieldwork to give students hands-on experience.

The level of education that social and human service assistants have completed often determines the responsibilities they are given. Those with a high school diploma are likely to do lower level work, such as helping clients fill out paperwork. Assistants with some college education may coordinate program activities or manage a group home.

Although postsecondary education is important, some employers may prefer or allow for applicants who have related work experience. In some cases, candidates may substitute such experience in place of postsecondary education.

## Training

---

Many social and human service assistants, particularly those without any postsecondary education, undergo a period of on-the-job training. Because such workers often are dealing with multiple clients from a wide variety of backgrounds, on-the-job training in case management helps prepare them to respond appropriately to the different needs and situations of their clients.

## Advancement

---

For social and human service assistants, additional education is almost always necessary for advancement. In general, advancement to case management or social work jobs requires a bachelor's or master's degree in human services, counseling, rehabilitation, social work, or a related field.

## Important Qualities

---

**Communication skills.** Social and human service assistants talk with clients about the challenges in their lives and assist them in getting help. These workers must be able to listen to their clients and to communicate the clients' needs to organizations that can help them.

**Compassion.** Social and human service assistants often work with people who are in stressful and difficult situations. To develop strong relationships, they must have compassion and empathy for their clients.

**Interpersonal skills.** Social and human service assistants must make their clients feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues. Assistants also need to build relationships with other service providers to become familiar with all of the resources that are available in their communities.

**Organizational skills.** Social and human service assistants often must complete lots of paperwork and work with many different clients. They must be organized in order to ensure that the paperwork is filed properly and that clients are getting the help they need.

**Problem-solving skills.** Social and human service assistants help clients find solutions to their problems. They must be able to listen carefully to their clients' needs and offer practical solutions.

**Time-management skills.** Social and human service assistants often work with many clients. They must manage their time effectively to ensure that their clients are getting the attention they need.

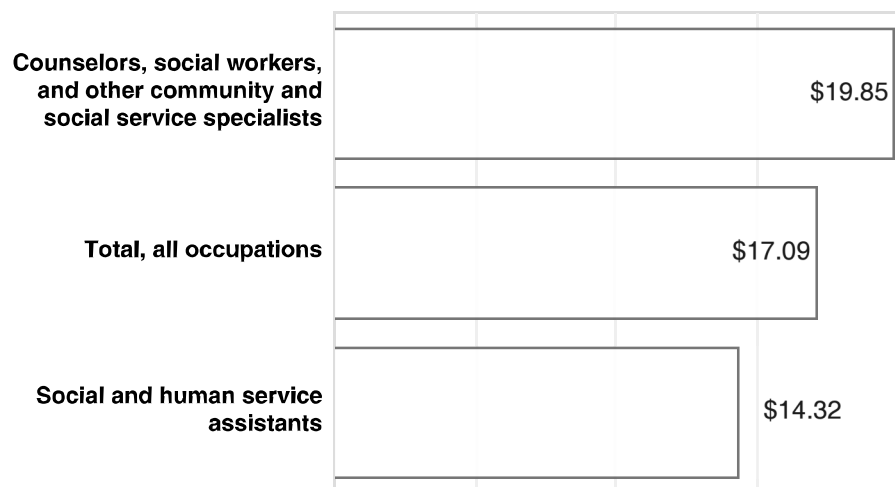
Some employers require a criminal background check. In some settings, workers need a valid driver's license.

## Pay

---

### Social and Human Service Assistants

### Median hourly wages, May 2014



Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics

The median hourly wage for social and human service assistants was \$14.32 in May 2014. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$9.55, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$22.85.

In May 2014, the median hourly wages for social and human service assistants in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

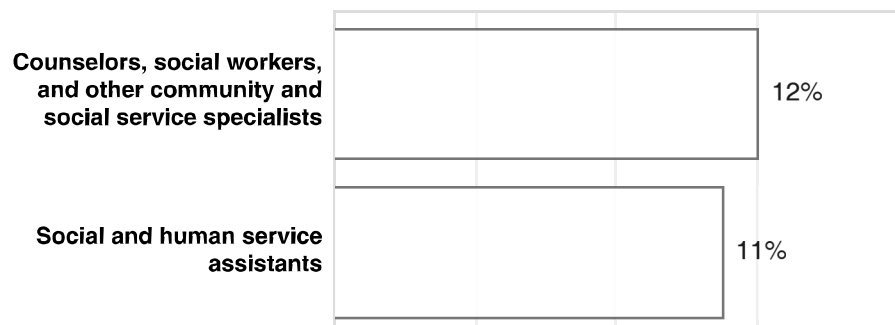
State and local government, excluding education and hospitals	\$17.07
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations	15.15
Individual and family services	14.04
Community and vocational rehabilitation services	12.84
Nursing and residential care facilities	12.65

Most social and human service assistants work full time. About 1 in 6 worked part time in 2014. Some work nights and weekends.

## Job Outlook

### Social and Human Service Assistants

Percent change in employment, projected 2014-24





Total, all occupations

7%

Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

Employment of social and human service assistants is projected to grow 11 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. Growth is projected due to a growing elderly population and rising demand for healthcare and social services.

The number of individuals who have access to health insurance is expected to continue to increase because of federal health insurance reform. An increase in the number of older adults is expected to result in growing demand for social services. The elderly population often needs services such as delivery of meals and adult daycare. Social and human service assistants, who help find and provide these services, will be needed to meet this increased demand.

In addition, growth is expected as more people seek treatment for their addictions and more drug offenders are sent to treatment programs rather than to jail. These phenomena should increase demand for social and human service assistants who work in treatment programs or work with people with addictions.

Social and human service assistants will continue to be needed to work in group homes, which are residences where individuals with particular needs can live and receive treatment. For example, there are group homes specifically for women or children of domestic abuse.

There also will be continued demand for child and family social and human service assistants. These workers will be needed to help others, such as [social workers](#), investigate child abuse cases, as well as to place children in foster care and with adoptive families.

## Job Prospects

Job prospects will be good overall but will be best for those with a degree in healthcare from an accredited college. Low pay and heavy workloads cause many workers to leave this occupation, creating opportunities for new workers entering the field.

### Employment projections data for social and human service assistants, 2014-24

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2014	Projected Employment, 2024	Change, 2014-24		Employment by Industry
				Percent	Numeric	
Social and human service assistants	21-1093	386,600	430,800	11	44,200	<a href="#">[XLSX]</a>

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

## State & Area Data

### Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

The [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (OES) program produces employment and wage estimates annually for over 800 occupations. These estimates are available for the nation as a whole, for individual states, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. The link(s) below go to OES data maps for employment and wages by state and area.

- [Social and human service assistants](#)

### Projections Central

Occupational employment projections are developed for all states by Labor Market Information (LMI) or individual state


Employment Projections offices. All state projections data are available at [www.projectionscentral.com](http://www.projectionscentral.com) . Information on this site allows projected employment growth for an occupation to be compared among states or to be compared within one state. In addition, states may produce projections for areas; there are links to each state's websites where these data may be retrieved.

## Career InfoNet

America's Career InfoNet includes hundreds of [occupational profiles](#) with data available by state and metro area. There are links in the left-hand side menu to compare occupational employment by state and occupational wages by local area or metro area. There is also a [salary info tool](#) to search for wages by zip code.

## Similar Occupations

This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of social and human service assistants.

	OCCUPATION	JOB DUTIES	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION	2014 MEDIAN PAY
	<a href="#">Childcare Workers</a>	Childcare workers provide care for children when parents and other family members are unavailable. They attend to children's basic needs, such as bathing and feeding. In addition, some help children prepare for kindergarten or help older children with homework.	High school diploma or equivalent	\$19,730
	<a href="#">Health Educators and Community Health Workers</a>	Health educators teach people about behaviors that promote wellness. They develop and implement strategies to improve the health of individuals and communities. Community health workers collect data and discuss health concerns with members of specific populations or communities.	<a href="#">See How to Become One</a>	\$42,450
	<a href="#">Home Health Aides</a>	Home health aides help people with disabilities, chronic illness, or cognitive impairment with activities of daily living. They often help older adults who need assistance. In some states, home health aides may be able to give a client medication or check the client's vital signs under the direction of a nurse or other healthcare practitioner.	No formal educational credential	\$21,380





**Mental Health Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists**

Mental health counselors and marriage and family therapists help people manage and overcome mental and emotional disorders and problems with family and other relationships. They listen to clients and ask questions to help the clients understand their problems and develop strategies to improve their lives.

Master's degree

\$42,250



**Personal Care Aides**

Personal care aides help clients with self-care and everyday tasks. They also provide social supports and assistance that enable clients to participate in their communities.

No formal educational credential

\$20,440



**Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists**

Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists monitor and work with probationers to prevent them from committing new crimes.

Bachelor's degree

\$49,060



**Rehabilitation Counselors**

Rehabilitation counselors help people with physical, mental, developmental, and emotional disabilities live independently. They work with clients to overcome or manage the personal, social, or psychological effects of disabilities on employment or independent living.

Master's degree

\$34,380





**School and Career Counselors**

School counselors help students develop academic and social skills and succeed in school. Career counselors assist people with the process of making career decisions by helping them develop skills or choose a career or educational program.

Master's degree

\$53,370

Social and community service managers

	<a href="#"><u><b>Social and Community Service Managers</b></u></a>	coordinate and supervise social service programs and community organizations. They manage staff who provide social services to the public.	Bachelor's degree	\$62,740
	<a href="#"><u><b>Social Workers</b></u></a>	Social workers help people solve and cope with problems in their everyday lives. One group of social workers—clinical social workers—also diagnose and treat mental, behavioral, and emotional issues.	<a href="#"><u>See How to Become One</u></a>	\$45,500
	<a href="#"><u><b>Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors</b></u></a>	Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors advise people who suffer from alcoholism, drug addiction, eating disorders, or other behavioral problems. They provide treatment and support to help the client recover from addiction or modify problem behaviors.	Bachelor's degree	\$39,270

## Contacts for More Information

For more information about social and human service assistants, visit

[National Organization for Human Services](#)

## O\*NET

[Social and Human Service Assistants](#)

### Suggested citation:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition*, Social and Human Service Assistants, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-and-human-service-assistants.htm> (visited March 04, 2016).

**Publish Date:** Thursday, December 17, 2015