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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE

Health and Human Services Educational Resource Guide

What is Human Services?

If you've ever wanted to work at a nonprofit or get involved with volunteer work in your community, then you've already thought about the field of Human Services. According to the [The National Organization of Human Services](#), this field is defined by people who work to create resources that meet the human needs of their communities.

This can mean many things, which makes Human Services a wide field. Often people in Human Services work on providing social programs. They typically connect people in need to those programs and coordinate, maintain and improve programs to better meet community needs.

People in the Human Services field can work with many different populations. These include children and families, the disabled, those in need of healthcare, the elderly, at risk-teens and more.

Does that sound like something you would like to do? Then read on to understand the details of this exciting and rewarding field.

About the Author



[Kelsey Tressler](#) is an award-winning writer and journalist with years of experience within the healthcare and education space. She has contributed to dozens of periodicals, publications and blogs, and she specializes in providing well-researched and thought-provoking content.

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The Ups and Downs of Human Services

Because of the broad field, Human Services workers **tend to have different schedules** and working environments. They often work 40-hour workweeks with some nights and weekends. They may travel to see how their programs and services interact with the community. They may also work directly with people to link them with these important services.

Generally speaking, the field of Human Services is about connecting with and helping people, so it is often a rewarding field. Many Human Services workers feel that their work is important and meaningful. If you have the motivation to give back and provide for your community, then this may be a worthwhile field for you.

On the other side of things, Human Services can be overwhelming at times. There are often clerical responsibilities like **paperwork** attached to these services, which can be time-consuming. Issues with services may arise and create work during the weekend or evening. And, as with most people-focused fields, working with people can lead to unique difficulties and hurdles.

Nevertheless, Human Services workers tend to show a high level of satisfaction at work. **A 2013 Gallup poll** reported that 85% of nonprofit workers surveyed were extremely satisfied, highly satisfied or satisfied with their work. Of those surveyed, 66% reported being satisfied because they believed in their organization's mission or purpose.

Populations Served by Human Services Workers

Have you ever volunteered at a homeless shelter or donated food to a food bank? What about mentoring a child through a Big Brothers Big Sisters program? If you've done any of these things, then you've worked **with a population served by Human Services**.

There are many different populations in need of support services. These include the elderly, people from low-income communities, veterans, people with disabilities or mental illness, children from food-insecure households, at-risk youth, people with addictions and many more. That's why the field of Human Services is so large—because there are many underserved communities.

Organizations and nonprofits usually focus on specific populations, though they may sometimes serve multiple populations at once through different

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targeted programs. Underserved social identities can also intersect. For example, a person who is homeless may also be suffering from mental illness or addiction, or an elderly person may also have a disability. Therefore, services can uplift several populations at once.

Human Services programs can include:

- Temporary or permanent housing – To help uplift homeless populations by offering affordable places to stay.
- Free or reduced food – To help combat hunger and food insecurity for low-income communities.
- Educational resources – To help uplift communities who experience a lack of access to education.
- Job search assistance – For those who struggle to find employment due to many different reasons, including lack of access and criminal history.
- Mentorship – For adolescents and at-risk teens to help develop positive relationships and role models.
- Mobility assistance – For people with disabilities who require accommodations to move freely in the world.
- Healthcare and rehabilitation – For those who need affordable physical or mental healthcare or who require rehabilitation as a result of drug dependency.
- Self-help resources – For people who are interested in bettering their lives but need connections to specific resources to do so.

Common Jobs for Human Services Workers

People in the Human Services field can work in many different jobs depending on their level of education. Some roles require a high school diploma, while others require an associate degree, bachelor's degree or higher.

For example, those looking to be counselors or provide psychological or healthcare services will **likely need** the appropriate licensing and education level. Social workers usually require a bachelor's degree, while community coordinators, program specialists and human services assistants require an associate degree or less.

Here are some common jobs within the Human Services field at the associate degree and under level:

- **Community Coordinators.** These Human Services employees help

organize events and other resources. They also make sure the community is aware of those services, and ensure that the events or services are accessible.

- [Family Support Workers](#), who assist families in need by connecting them with and educating them on services. This usually includes direct contact with clients in need of services.
- [Human Services Program Specialists](#), who assist leaders and work on administrative and organizational tasks. They might also work with clients to help connect them to right services.
- [Social Services Assistants](#), who assist other health and human services professionals, like social workers. They help make sure that clients receive the services they need and don't experience any barriers to accessibility.

Human Services workers can find positions in many different environments. [Some common ones include:](#)

- Individual and family services
- State and local government
- Nursing and residential care facilities
- Community rehabilitation centers

If you are considering the field of Human Services, it's important to understand what you would like to do. You may feel drawn toward certain environments and populations—like the elderly in nursing home facilities, for example.

So far you have learned about what human services is and what human services workers do, but you might also want to know what kinds of organizations currently exist. According to [The Nonprofit Sector in Brief 2015: Public Charities, Giving, and Volunteering](#), there are about 1.41 million nonprofits in the United States. So there are plenty of options out there for human services workers.

While every organization has different needs and candidate requirements, here are some general and well-known human services organizations.

- [Meals on Wheels](#) – This organization is dedicated to providing food and resources to the elderly in communities all across the country.
- [Wounded Warrior Project](#) – This organization works to empower wounded veterans with necessary and no-cost services and programs.
- [The YMCA](#) – This organization provides community resources and

space to people of all ages, races and backgrounds.

- [Doctors Without Borders](#) – This organization provides vital and life-saving care to communities in need across the world.
- [American Civil Liberties Union](#) – The ACLU works to defend and preserve civil liberties in the United States according to the U.S. constitution and the law.
- [Feeding America](#) – Feeding America is a network of food banks that works to relieve hunger nationwide.
- [The American Cancer Society](#) – This organization raises funding for cancer research, services, prevention and support.
- [Direct Relief](#) – This organization does what its name implies and works to provide direct relief for people in poverty or emergency situations.
- [The Conservation Fund](#) – This organization is dedicated to helping conserve vital natural resources in the United States.

These are just a few of the organization that exist to offer services and programs to support public wellbeing and underserved communities. Not all opportunities are within nonprofit organizations either. Other organizations involved in Human Services include for-profit social service agencies and state and local governments.

It depends on where you would like to work, what you would like to do and who you want to work with.

Getting into the Human Services Field

The needs for [becoming qualified for entry level jobs](#) in this field can vary depending on what you want to do. Typically, workers in Human Services have at least a high school diploma. It's common for entry-level workers to also have an associate degree in Human Services, and some employers look for candidates with practical experience in this field, as well.

[Human Services degree programs](#) prepare students for working in this field through teaching a variety of subjects, which can include:

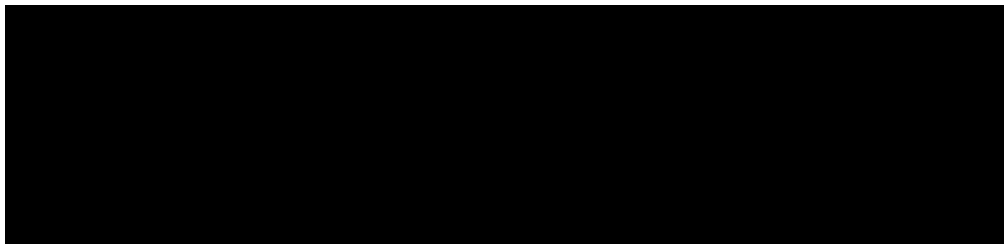
- Public and Community Health
- Family Dynamics
- Social Welfare
- Legal and Ethical Issues in Human Services
- Human Behavior in the Social Environment

Your level of education and experience may determine what kinds of jobs you are hired to do within the Health Services field. New employees in the

Human Services field typically receive on-the-job training, as well, to help them prepare for their new duties.

The skillsets required can also vary. [According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the following skillsets are valuable to social and human service assistants:

- **Communication skills.** Workers in this field often spend a lot of time talking to clients about their needs and issues. You may interview clients to help connect them to services offered by your organization, or you may talk with your organization to let them know about the needs of its clients.
- **Compassion.** Human Services workers help people throughout stressful situations and difficult times. It's important to be able to find empathy and compassion for each client you work with in this field. Relationships are also an important aspect of Human Services, and compassion is beneficial to building strong relationships with clients.
- **Interpersonal skills.** When you work in this field, you tend to talk to people about their most sensitive issues: poverty, health, drug abuse and more. Having strong interpersonal skills will help you communicate effectively when it comes to these sensitive issues.
- **Organizational skills.** While this work involves human interaction, it also requires a lot of paperwork for many different clients. It's important to be organized to make sure you fill out and file everything correctly. Many workers also juggle many different clients and services, so organization is definitely a plus.
- **Problem-solving skills.** Workers in this field typically help clients solve complicated and life-affecting problems. It's important to have solid problem-solving skills so that you can listen to the needs of your clients and then offer practical, workable solutions.
- **Time-management skills.** Human services workers tend to be busy in their day-to-day work lives. Time management is important to make sure that you're completing everything you need to so that you can serve your clients fully.





Job Outlook & Salary

[The job outlook](#) for social and human service assistants, the category under which human services workers with an associate degree or less fall, is generally positive. Employment in this field is projected to grow by 16% from 2016-2026, which is faster than the rate of all occupations.

This increase will be caused in part by the increasing number of older adults who require social services. It may also be caused by federal health insurance reform, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[The median pay](#) for social and human service assistants is \$31,810 per year or \$15.29 per hour, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That means half the workers in this occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. In addition, the lowest 10 percent of workers earned less than 20,800, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$50,640.

Pay can also depend on the type of organization. For example, the median annual wage was \$37,230 for human services workers in state and local government (excluding education and hospitals). By contrast, the median annual wage for workers in community and vocational rehabilitation services was \$28,420.

Most social and human service assistants work full-time, with some nights and weekends. About 1 out of every 6 workers worked part time in 2014 according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

This should provide you with a solid foundation for what Human Services is and what Human Services workers do. This growing field is looking for new candidates with a passion for helping their communities. If that sounds like you, then you might want to look into pursuing education and a career in the Human Services field.

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