Forensic Social Work

Social workers apply principles of social work theory and methods, use specialized knowledge gained from experience in forensic mental health settings, conduct assessments, and provide case management, advocacy, and counseling. Forensic social workers also have knowledge of the criminal court system and issues that exist where behavioral health and the law intersect.

About DSHS

The Department of Social and Health Services' Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration provides information about careers in forensic behavioral health which play an important role in improving the lives of people with behavioral health conditions involved in the criminal court system. For more information about positions open within DSHS, please visit www.careers.wa.gov.

Forensic Behavioral Health

Forensic behavioral health is the intersection of behavioral health and the law. The system itself involves various entities that have a touchpoint to people who are involved with the criminal court system and may have a behavioral health condition.

Choosing a career as a practitioner in this human services field offers many diverse work environments. Examples include working with law enforcement in co-responder roles or in a corrections setting; in inpatient settings such as state psychiatric facilities and residential treatment facilities; and in community settings such as outpatient competency restoration programs, or community behavioral health agencies. Service providers in this field often interact with legal partners such as lawyers and judges, corrections officers, and first responders.

For more information

Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration, OFMHS
www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/office-forensic-mental-health-services

Workforce Development Administrator
Leah Henley | Leah.henley1@dshs.wa.gov
https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/office-forensic-mental-health-services/workforce-development

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Forensic Social Work

Forensic Behavioral Health Career Path

Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration
Office of Forensic Mental Health Services

DSHS
WASHINGTON STATE Department of Social and Health Services

Examples of Work Environments

Typical work environments for forensic social workers include community settings such as outpatient competency restoration facilities, or with behavioral health organizations. Social workers also often work in inpatient settings such state or private behavioral health hospitals, correctional settings, and residential treatment facilities.

Schools in Washington

Bachelors

Eastern Washington University, Heritage University , Pacific Lutheran University, St. Martins University, Seattle University, University of of Washington, Walla Walla University

Masters

Eastern Washington University, Seattle University, University of Washington, Walla Walla University

Education

Most forensic social work positions in Washington require a master's degree or above and licensure. There are two options; a Licensed Advanced Social Worker (LASW) or a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). An LICSW allows for practice in a private setting. See the Council on Social Work Education for more information.

Source: CSWE, Council on Social Work Education, Accredited Programs WAC 388-875

Begin

Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) from a CSWE accredited school

Masters of Social Work (MSW) from a CSWE accredited school

Supervised experience required:
- 3,200 hours for Licensed Advanced Social Work (SW)
- 4,000 hours for Licensed Independent Clinical Social Work

Licensed Advanced Social Work Path

Licensed Independent Clinical Social Work Path

Pass the American Association of State Social Work Board's advanced examination

Pass the American Association of State Social Work Board's clinical examination

Licensed Advanced SW (LASW)

Licensed Independent Clinical SW (LICSW)

New Opportunities