

# 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 Administration (transforms lives by supporting sustainable recovery, independence and wellness. Within BHA, the Office of Forensic Mental Health Services), provides information about careers in forensic behavioral health which play an important role in improving the lives of individuals with behavioral health conditions involved in the criminal court system. For more information about positions open within DSHS, please visit [www.careers.wa.gov](http://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 Administration, OFMHS

[www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/  
office-forensic-mental-health-services](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/office-forensic-mental-health-services)

#### Workforce Development

Susan Holmgren

[susan.holmgren@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:susan.holmgren@dshs.wa.gov) 360-529-7388  
[www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/workforce-development](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/workforce-development)

## Forensic Social Work



## Forensic Behavioral Health Career Path

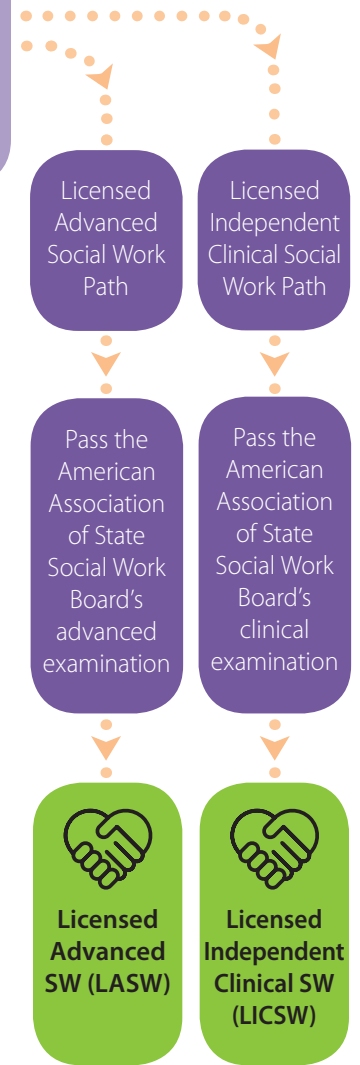
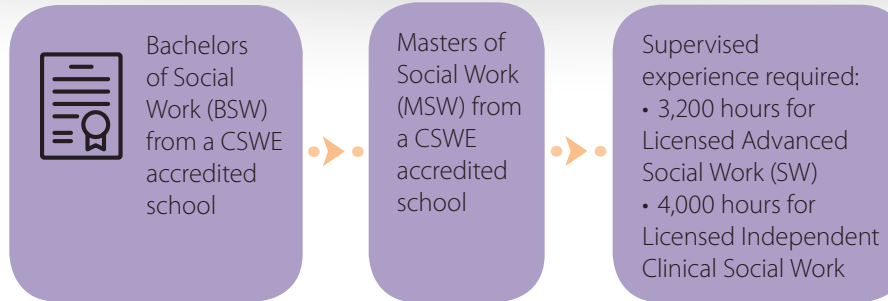
Office of Forensic Mental Health Services

# Pathway to Forensic Behavioral Health Forensic Social Work

## Examples of Work Environments

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

Begin



## Schools in Washington

### Bachelors

EWU - Spokane, Everett, Vancouver, Heritage University, Pacific Lutheran University, St. Martins University, Seattle University, U of W, Walla Walla University

### Masters

EWU - Cheney, Everett, Spokane, Vancouver, online Seattle University, U of W, 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.

CACREP-Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs



New Opportunities