Social Work Statistics

Social work is a demanding career, but one that is both rewarding and exciting. Social workers strive to help those in need and to address issues that prevent individuals from achieving their full potential. There is a tremendous need for more social workers in the U.S. today.

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in social work is expected to grow by 25 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. Growth will be due to an increase in demand for health care and social services, but will vary by specialty. Close to 54 percent of the jobs created between 2008 through 2018 will be in healthcare and social assistance industries.

- According to Philanthropy News Digest, the steady increase in caseloads and growing severity of clients’ problems, along with shrinking resources, is making it difficult for social workers to meet clients’ needs. In addition, providing social work services in rural communities is challenging since more than half the available social workers are located in hospitals in metropolitan areas.

- According to the National Association of Social Workers, an additional 100,000 social workers will be needed by 2018. The 600 accredited schools with social work programs are struggling to recruit and retain enough graduates to keep up with the growing need for social workers.

- The Las Vegas Sun reports there are currently 640,000 licensed social workers nationally, the equivalent of 207 social workers per 100,000 people.

- In a national study of licensed social workers, the National Association of Social Workers found that agencies struggling with social worker vacancies are relying on outsourcing, and the use of non-professional employees, to fill empty slots. The study also showed that workload expansion, on top of fewer resources, hinders social worker retention.

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2 http://www.naswdc.org/pressroom/events/clark_aging.asp
4 http://www.naswdc.org/pressroom/2006/030806.asp