

MACRO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Macro Social Work is significantly expanding in three areas. These are:

Community Organization

A return to the need for community-driven processes, in time has enhanced the field of rebirth and rediscovery of "community," has fed the demand for social workers skilled in Macro Social Work practice. There are probably more jobs for community organizers today than there were in the 1960s.

Community Development

Social workers can find rewarding work in developing community in the literal sense through building houses, renovating abandoned buildings, and finding affordable housing in communities and by developing community capacity through social infrastructure as organizers, planners, managers, and program developers.

Public Health

Health promotion and disease prevention activities can be effectively promoted by social workers.

Macro practice social workers should possess knowledge in:

- Community Organizing - Community organizing has a value base of participation in community-driven processes. The focus of community organizing is on involving the community by conducting a strengths assessment, doing strategic planning, developing skills for implementing and evaluating efforts.
- Planning and Program Development - Social planning draws on both analytical and political skills in attempting to remedy the multiple social problems affecting the community. Such a focus utilizes a generic set of planning theories and principles and concentrates on developing a problem-solving framework out of which one can work with communities and agencies.
- Human Services Management - All social workers need to have basic administrative and management knowledge and skills regardless of their primary work. Macro practitioners should have basic competencies in proposal writing, budgeting, supervision, evaluation research, program development, and financial management and planning.

What experience is needed for macro practice and how does one get it?

There is a growing trend for students to enter graduate social work degree programs with shorter and shorter intervals between their undergraduate and graduate studies. New Master's-prepared social workers are entering the workforce with little volunteer or prior work experience. Training in macro practice social work training and jobs in this area allow one to get broad hands-on experience.

What personal qualities should a macro practice social worker?

- Commitment to working with the community driven process and basic respect for people
- High energy, strong motivation,
- Flexibility and patience, ability to live with ambivalence
- Analytical thinking
- Sense of humor, perspective and vision
- Persistence, focus, and follow through

What should you do to develop yourself once you have the job?

- Find good supervision and mentorship
- Develop and maintain good support systems off the job with colleagues, former supervisors/field advisors and faculty members
- Keep reading in the field/Attend conferences and in-service trainings

Prepared by the Core Group of the Career Development Directors in Social Work Education, 7/99
