



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Illiana Health Care System

Social Worker Qualifications

Salary Range: \$57,118 to 89,835

A Recruitment Incentive has been authorized for highly qualified candidates.

Basic Requirements:

- **Citizenship:** Non-citizens may only be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with VA Policy.
- **English** Social workers must be proficient in spoken and written English in accordance with VA Handbook 5005, Part II, chapter 3, section A, paragraph 3j.
- **Education:** Must have a master's degree in social work from a school of social work fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Graduates of schools of social work that are in candidacy status do not meet this requirement until the School of Social Work is fully accredited. A doctoral degree in social work may not be substituted for the master's degree in social work. **(TRANSCRIPTS REQUIRED)**
- **Licensure:** Must be licensed or certified by a state to independently practice social work at the master's degree level. **(COPY OF LICENSE REQUIRED)**

Exception: VHA may waive the licensure or certification requirement for persons who are otherwise qualified, pending completion of state prerequisites for licensure/certification examinations. This exception only applies at the GS-9 grade level. For the GS-11 grade level and above, the candidate must be licensed or certified. At the time of appointment, the supervisor, chief social work or social work executive will provide the unlicensed/uncertified social worker with the written requirements for licensure or certification, including the time by which the license or certification must be obtained and the consequences for not becoming licensed or certified by the deadline.

In addition to the basic requirements for employment, the following criteria must be met when determining the grade of candidates.

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Grade Determinations:

GS-9 Level:

Experience, Education and Licensure: None beyond the basic requirements. This is the entry level and are closely supervised.

In addition, the candidates must demonstrate all of the KSAs:

- 1) Ability to work with Veterans and family members from various socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, educational, and other diversified backgrounds utilizing counseling skills.
- 2) Ability to assess the psychosocial functioning and needs of Veterans and their family members, and to formulate and implement a treatment plan, identifying the Veterans problems, strengths, weaknesses, coping skills, and assistance needed.
- 3) Ability to implement treatment modalities in working with individuals, families, and groups to achieve treatment goals. This requires judgment and skill in utilizing supportive, problem solving, or crisis intervention techniques.
- 4) Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and communicate with clients, staff, and representatives of community agencies.
- 5) Fundamental knowledge of medical and mental health diagnoses, disabilities, and treatment procedures. This includes acute, chronic, and traumatic illnesses/injuries; common medications and their effects/side effects; and medical terminology.

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GS-11 Level:

Specialized Experience: In addition to the basic requirements, you must have a minimum of one year of post-MSW degree experience in the field of health care social work (VA or non-VA experience).

OR

Doctoral degree in social work from a school of social work may be substituted for the required one year of professional social work experience in a clinical setting. **(TRANSCRIPTS REQUIRED)**

AND

In addition to the experience above, candidates must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

- 1) Knowledge of community resources, how to make appropriate referrals to community and other governmental agencies for services, and ability to coordinate services.
- 2) Skill in independently conducting psychosocial assessments and treatment interventions to a wide variety of individuals from various socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, educational and other diversified backgrounds.
- 3) Knowledge of medical and mental health diagnoses, disabilities and treatment procedures (i.e. acute, chronic and traumatic illnesses/injuries, common medications and their effects/side effects, and medical terminology) to formulate a treatment plan.
- 4) Skill in independently implementing different treatment modalities in working with individuals, families, and groups who are experiencing a variety of psychiatric, medical, and social problems to achieve treatment goals.
- 5) Ability to provide consultation services to new social workers, social work graduate students, and other staff about the psychosocial needs of patients and the impact of psychosocial problems on health care and compliance with treatment.

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References: VA Handbook 5005/120 Part II Appendix G39 Social Worker Qualification Standard

Physical Requirements: The work is primarily sedentary. Physical demands do not exceed those of a typical office setting. There may be some walking, standing, twisting, turning, sitting, pushing, bending, repetitive keyboarding, or carrying of light items.

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