BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK (BSW)

Indiana University Northwest, through the Indiana University School of Social Work (IUSSW), offers an undergraduate social work degree accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) degree program prepares students to work with vulnerable people as individuals and as members of families, groups and communities.

In a society facing change and turmoil, social workers are trained professionals who can help people manage change, challenges and the stresses of life. Those who pursue the social work degree enjoy working with a diverse group of people, desire a challenging and rewarding career, and seek a deeper understanding of human behavior.

Faculty members are social work practitioners themselves who guide students through the Division of Social Work’s nationally accredited program of knowledge and skill development. Students earning a BSW degree qualify to take the exam for the beginning social work license in Indiana and surrounding states.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Completion of the Bachelor of Social Work degree requires 120 credit hours and a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average.

Students transferring to IU Northwest with an associate of arts or sciences degree from a community college can begin the BSW coursework and complete the BSW degree within 24 to 30 months as a full-time student, provided that they transfer in a significant number of the BSW’s program’s required general-education and support-course requirements.

Students should consult with the department and their advisor for additional information concerning prerequisites, course content and academic counseling.

COURSEWORK

Students are required to take 52 credit hours of required social work courses and 53 to 55 credit hours of general education and supportive liberal arts courses. The remainder of the required credit hours is earned through elective courses. Students must successfully complete all required freshman, sophomore and junior courses and achieve senior standing before enrolling in their senior year course work.

Before applying for formal admission to the BSW program, students must take Introduction to Social Work and may take the following social work courses:

- Understanding Diversity
- Growth and Human Development in the Social Environment
- History and Analysis of Social Welfare Policy

Formal admission is required before students can enroll in the junior social work courses and requires the submission of an admissions packet, a minimum of 12 earned college credit hours, the completion of Introduction to Social Work with a minimum grade of “C,” and a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Graduates of the BSW program are thoroughly prepared for graduate education in a Master of Social Work (MSW) program and can apply for advanced standing in an accredited MSW program, thus shortening their course of graduate study. Students accepted into the MSW degree program within the IUSSW program on the IU Northwest campus can apply 15 credit hours of their undergraduate course work toward the graduate degree, provided that they are accepted in a graduate program within five years of earning their BSW degree.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH A BSW?

BSW graduates are prepared to work effectively with individuals, families, small groups, communities, and organizations in a variety of settings. Graduates are prepared for immediate employment in both public and private agencies providing both direct and indirect services. Some of the settings in which graduates may be employed include:

- advocacy programs
- aging services
- children and youth services
- community crisis centers
- criminal justice agencies
- disability service agencies
- domestic violence programs
- home care agencies
- homeless shelters
- hospices
- hospitals/clinics
- income maintenance programs
- legal services agencies
- mental health services
- nursing homes
- residential treatment programs
- schools
- substance abuse programs
- voluntary associations

HANDS-ON LEARNING

In addition to the classroom experience, the BSW program also offers an extensive practicum (internship) experience in which students have a hands-on opportunity to work in agencies, learn from veteran social workers, and explore career paths upon graduation. A wide variety of community agencies serve as practicum sites, including: agencies serving older adults, families and children; youth; adults experiencing stress, addictions, and mental health issues; individuals in hospice programs; persons living with HIV/AIDS; women leaving domestic violence situations; persons who are homeless or living in poverty; and others.

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

The Division of Social Work sponsors a chapter of Phi Alpha, the national social work honor society. Also available to students is the Student Social Work Association which offers additional learning experiences that support the BSW academic program.

RELATED DEGREE OPTION

BSW majors can pursue minors that support their desire to work in a particular field of practice. Frequent minors include: psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, criminal justice, and public health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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