

LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES, 2004

Chapter 3 of 4

Employment Patterns

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March 2006

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Chapter 3. Employment Patterns of Licensed Social Workers

This chapter describes the employment patterns of these licensed social workers based on the responses to the 2004 licensed social worker survey. Information and insights from other sources are also included as appropriate.

The tabulations cover all important aspects of social work employment, including employment sector, employment setting, and practice area. They also highlight differences and similarities in employment patterns for different subsets of licensed social workers, especially groups defined by age and gender.

Supply of Social Workers

To provide a context for the analysis of the 2004 survey responses, this section begins with some trend data on employed social workers from BLS. These data suggest that the social work workforce has been relatively stable in recent years in terms of practitioners per 100,000 population.

Supply Keeping Up with Demand

To provide a perspective on this number of licensed social workers in the U.S., numbers of *employed* social workers as estimated by BLS were compiled for recent years. As expected, the BLS numbers were about 50 percent higher than the counts of licensed social workers used to create the sample for the licensed social worker survey. Figure 1 shows that on a per capita basis the numbers of these employed social workers were relatively constant between 1999 and 2003 at about 162 employed social workers per 100,000 population. Average annual salaries of these employed social workers increased from \$32,480 to \$37,650 (15.9%) over the same period.

Numbers Per Capita Vary Across States

The licensure lists used to create the sampling frame for the 2004 survey showed that there were approximately 310,000 *licensed* social workers in the U.S. in 2004, or 101 per 100,000 population. The map in Figure 2 shows, as is true for most professions, that these practitioners were not uniformly distributed across the fifty states. The ratio of active licensed social workers per 100,000 Population varied by a factor of about 17 across the states in 2004, from 23.7 in New Hampshire to 408 in Maryland. [Counts for Hawaii and Delaware were not available.]

This variation in the ratio of practitioners to population is relatively large compared to similar ratios for most licensed health professions. This is an indication of a lack of standardization of roles and utilization of licensed social workers across the states. It is also consistent with the fact that the requirements for licensure eligibility (e.g., education required) for licensed social workers also vary substantially across the states. The data show that, with the exception of New York, large states had relatively low numbers of licensed social workers per capita.

Figure 1. Social Workers per 100,000 Population and Average Annual Salary of Social Workers in the U.S., 1999 to 2003

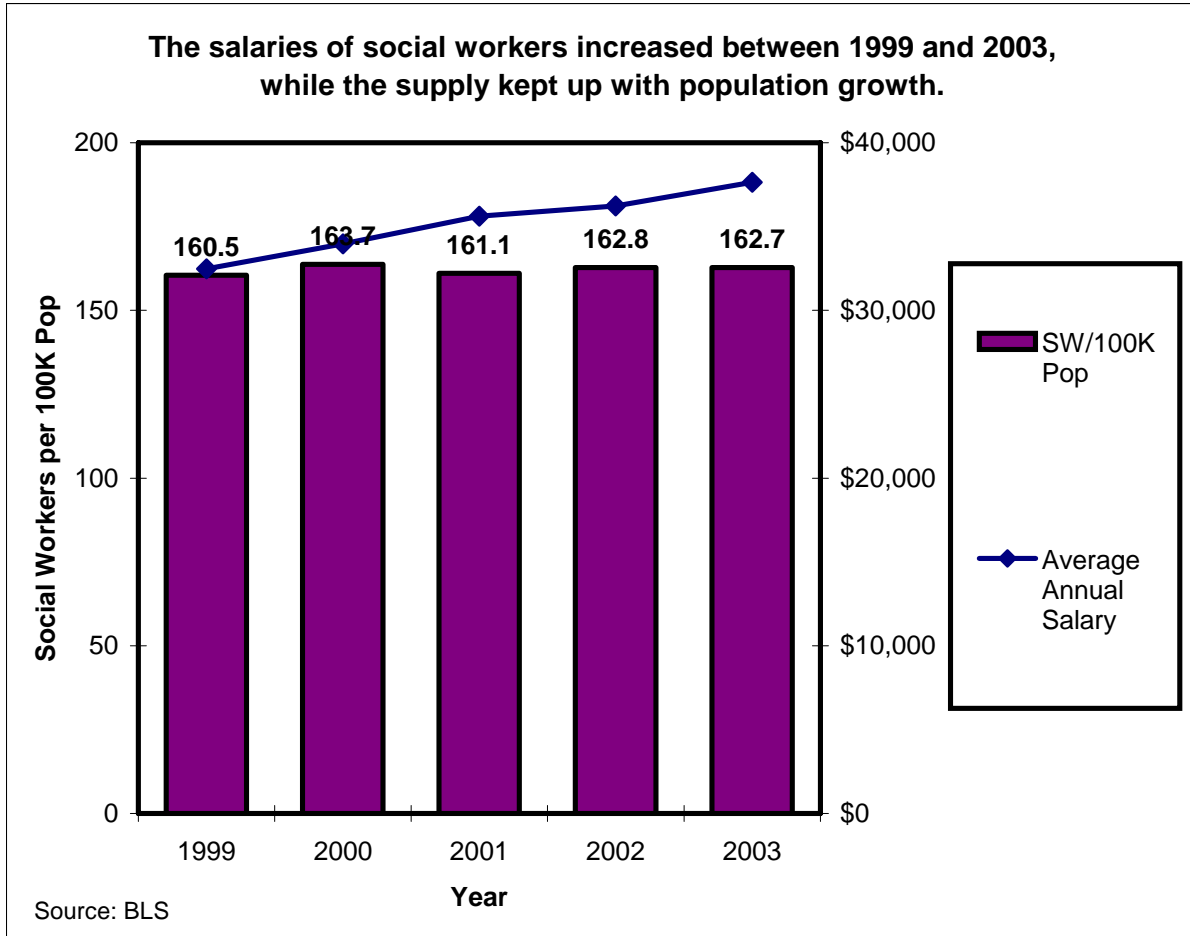
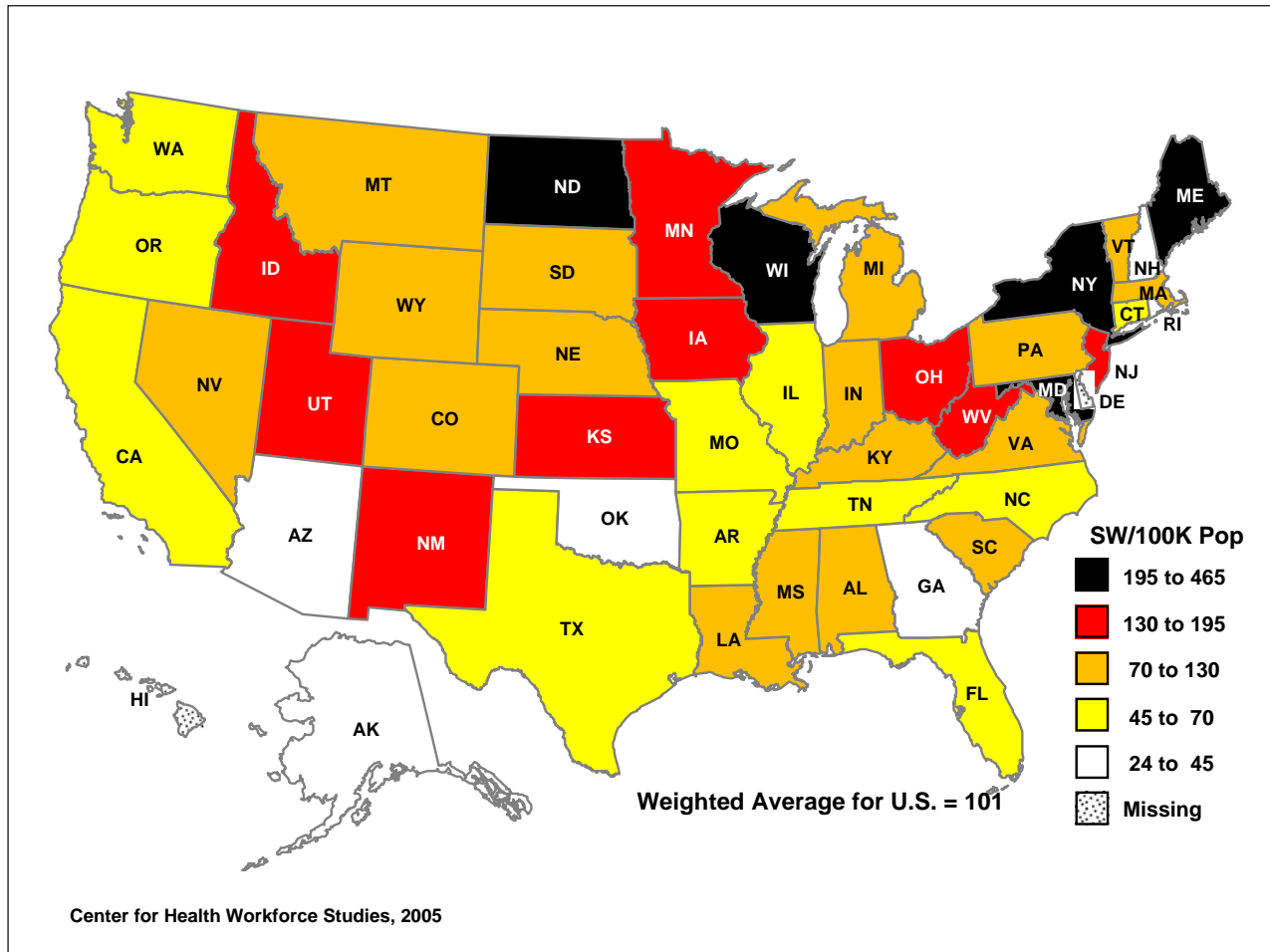


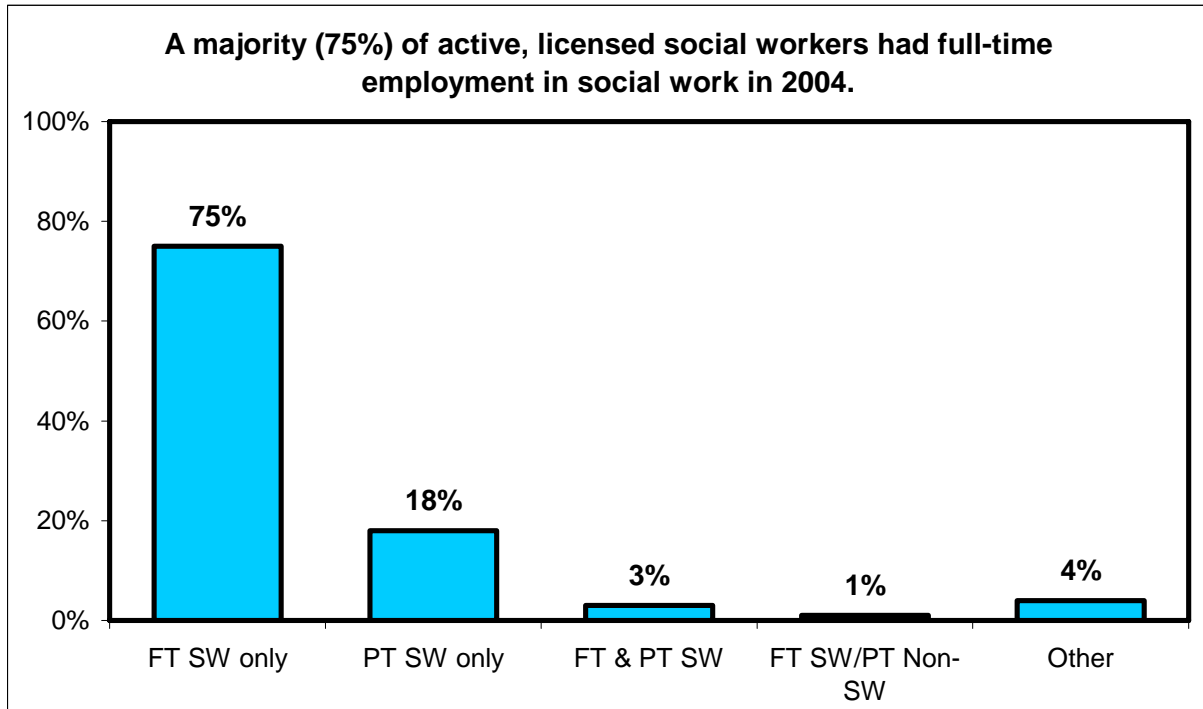
Figure 2. Licensed Social Workers per 100,000 Population for the Fifty States and the District of Columbia, 2004



Employment

Three-quarters of active licensed social workers were employed only full time in social work in 2004, and 18 percent were employed only part time in social work (Figure 3). Another 8 percent were employed in other fields or in combinations of situations.

Figure 3. Employment Status of Active, Licensed Social Workers, 2004

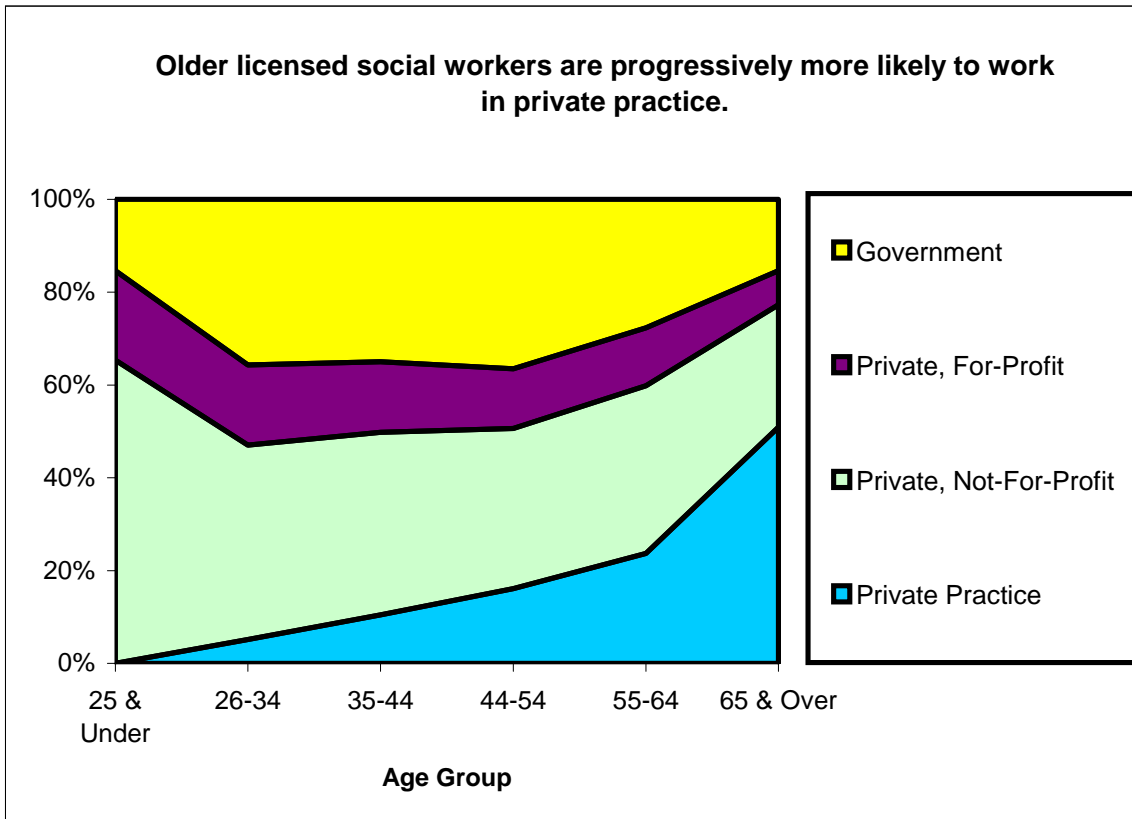


Sector of Primary Employment

The sector of the economy in which licensed social workers were employed varied with the age of the practitioners. Figure 4 below shows the percentages of practitioners whose primary employment is in each of four different sectors: Public (Federal Government, State Government, Local Government, or Military); Private For-Profit Organization, Private Not-For-Profit Organization, and Private Practice.

Older social workers are more likely to work as private practitioners, suggesting a possible career path pattern.

Figure 4. Sector of Primary Employment of Licensed Social Workers, By Age Group, 2004



The Public Sector in Figure 4 includes four sub-sectors. The percentages in each of the sub-sectors are shown in Table 1 below. The figures show that state government organizations employ about half of all licensed social workers in public agencies in all age groups.

Table 1. Sub-Sector of Primary Employment of Licensed Social Workers in the Public Sector, By Age Group, 2004

Public Sub-Sector	Age Group						Total
	25 & Under	26 -34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 – 64	65 & Over	
Federal Government	0.0%	5.0%	8.7%	7.8%	9.6%	0.0%	7.6%
State Government	75.0%	53.7%	50.9%	54.1%	48.7%	48.0%	52.1%
Local Government	0.0%	39.3%	37.7%	36.7%	41.2%	48.0%	38.4%
Military	25.0%	2.0%	2.6%	1.4%	0.4%	4.0%	1.8%
n	4	201	265	425	228	25	1,148

Private practice is an important avenue for professional advancement for licensed social workers. In the same way that becoming a nurse practitioner provides a career path for RNs seeking more advanced professional practice, private practice provides new career opportunities for licensed social workers with the interest and ability.

Practice Area

Another perspective on active licensed social workers is the practice area that is the focus of their primary employment. Table 2 shows that mental health was the largest practice area for active licensed social workers in all four of the employment sectors in 2004, representing nearly 37% of all practitioners. Child Welfare/Family, Health, and Aging were next on the list of practice areas, representing just over 13%, just under 13%, and 9% of all social workers, respectively.

Table 2. Practice Area of Primary Employment of Active Licensed Social Workers in the U.S., By Sector of Primary Employment, 2004

Practice Area of Primary Employment	Sector of Primary Employment				
	Private Practice	Private, Not-For-Profit	Private, For-Profit	Gov't	Total
Addictions	1.7%	3.3%	4.7%	2.1%	2.8%
Adolescents	4.5%	6.8%	4.7%	6.0%	5.9%
Aging	1.9%	6.8%	18.8%	6.0%	8.8%
Child Welfare/Family	6.6%	12.0%	5.6%	21.5%	13.3%
Community Development	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%
Criminal Justice	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	3.1%	1.3%
Developmental Disabilities	0.4%	2.9%	3.1%	4.5%	3.0%
Higher Education	0.0%	1.2%	0.7%	3.0%	1.5%
Homeless/Displaced Persons	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Income Assistance	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%
Health	0.4%	19.7%	22.8%	7.5%	12.9%
Mental Health	80.5%	31.8%	30.5%	22.8%	36.8%
Occupational Social Work	0.2%	0.3%	2.1%	0.9%	0.7%
School Social Work	0.2%	3.8%	1.6%	17.0%	7.2%
Other	3.0%	5.3%	4.7%	3.5%	4.2%
Total Count	534	1,195	426	1,048	3,203
Percent of Total Count	16.7%	37.3%	13.3%	32.7%	100%

The patterns of practice area varied across the four employment sectors. For example, the figures indicate that private practice was predominantly Mental Health, while Child Welfare/Family and Developmental Disabilities were disproportionately in the government sector, and Health was more likely to be in the private sector.

Primary Employment Setting

As one considers the composition of the licensed social worker workforce, it is interesting to know the percentages of active practitioners who work in different employment settings. Table 3 shows primary employment by setting for different age groups based on the 2004 survey responses. It shows that, except for the 65 & Over age group, Health Care Organizations were the primary employment setting for the largest percentage of active licensed social workers (31.8% overall). Private Practice and Social Service Organizations/ Services were each the primary employment setting for another 17.5 percent of social workers.

The table also reveals the same shift into private practice shown earlier for sector of primary employment. The percentage in private practice increased steadily by age group until in the 65 and Over group it reaches nearly 54% of older social workers who remain active. This increase appears to be primarily at the expense of social service organizations and organizations and services that serve children. It cannot be determined from the survey data the extent to which the new private practitioners may continue to serve these client groups.

Table 3. Primary Employment Setting of Active Licensed Social Workers in the U.S., By Age Group, 2004

Primary Employment Setting Category	Age Group						Total
	25 & Under	26 -34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 – 64	65 & Over	
Private Practice	0.0%	5.6%	11.0%	17.2%	25.3%	53.9%	17.5%
Health Care Org	33.3%	34.8%	34.5%	31.4%	30.2%	20.1%	31.8%
Social Svc Org/Svc	25.0%	22.8%	18.0%	16.2%	16.7%	10.4%	17.5%
LTC Org/Svc	4.2%	8.0%	5.3%	6.2%	5.8%	2.6%	6.0%
Child Org/Svc	16.7%	11.9%	15.5%	11.2%	8.0%	3.2%	11.2%
Public Agency	0.0%	39.3%	37.7%	36.7%	41.2%	48.0%	38.4%
Other	16.7%	9.9%	9.9%	11.0%	8.6%	7.1%	9.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	24	514	715	1,093	771	154	3,271

Roles and Tasks

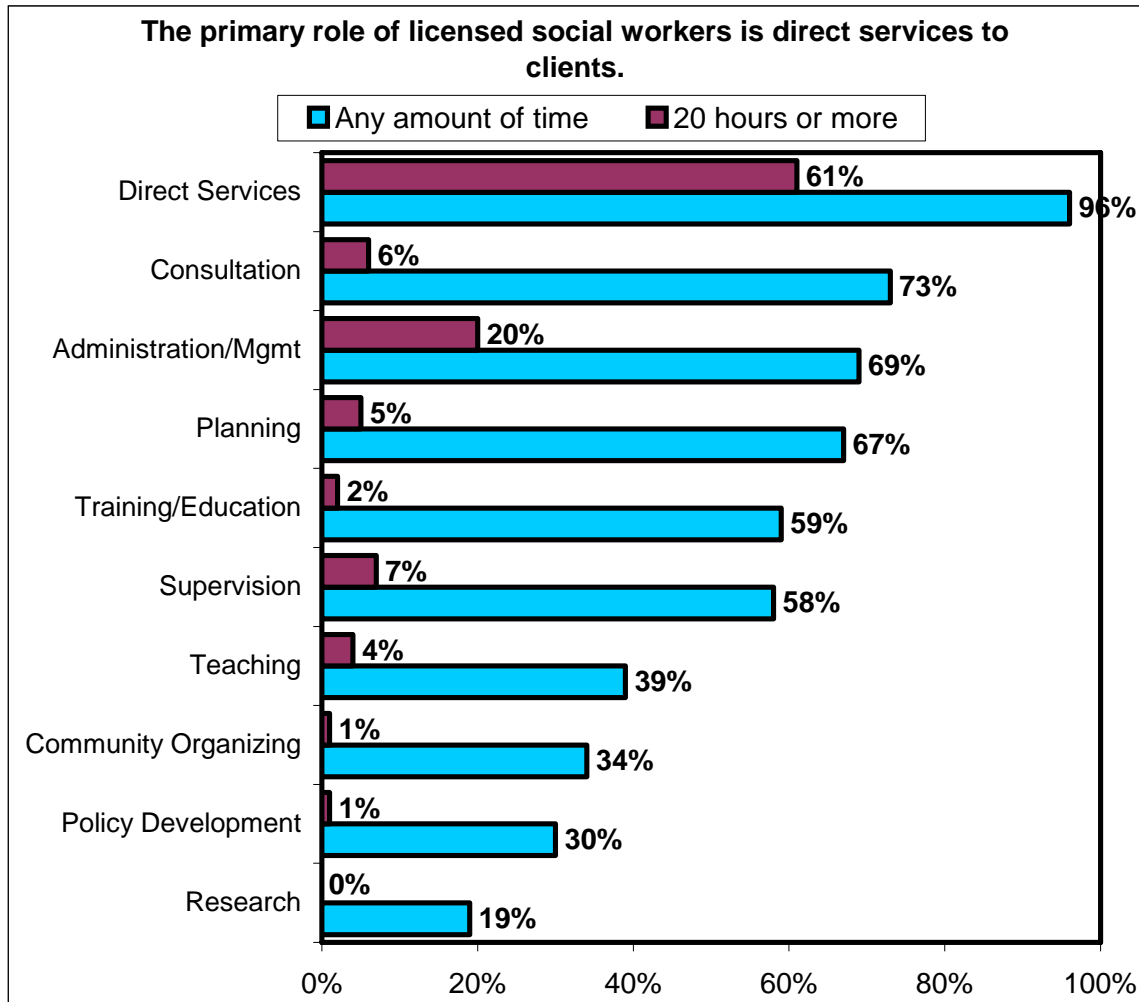
The roles and tasks of the survey respondents may be the best indicators of what licensed social workers do in their professional practice. This section of the report provides basic information on these two aspects of their work.

Roles

Figure 5 shows that the most common role in which licensed social workers spent any time is direct services (96%), followed by consultation (73%) and administration/management (69%). Social workers are least likely to spend any time in research (19%), policy development (30%), and community organizing (34%). Relatively few social workers devoted as much as 20 hours a week to any role other than direct services (61%) or administration/management (20%).

Licensed social workers were most likely to be involved with the tasks of screening/assessment (93%), information/referral (91%), crisis intervention (89%), individual counseling (86%), and client education (86%). These were not necessarily tasks on which they spend a majority of their time, however. There were only four tasks significant numbers of social workers reported spending more than half of their time on: individual counseling (29%), psychotherapy (25%), case management (12%), and screening/assessment (10%). Fewer than 10% of social workers reported spending more than half their time on any other task.

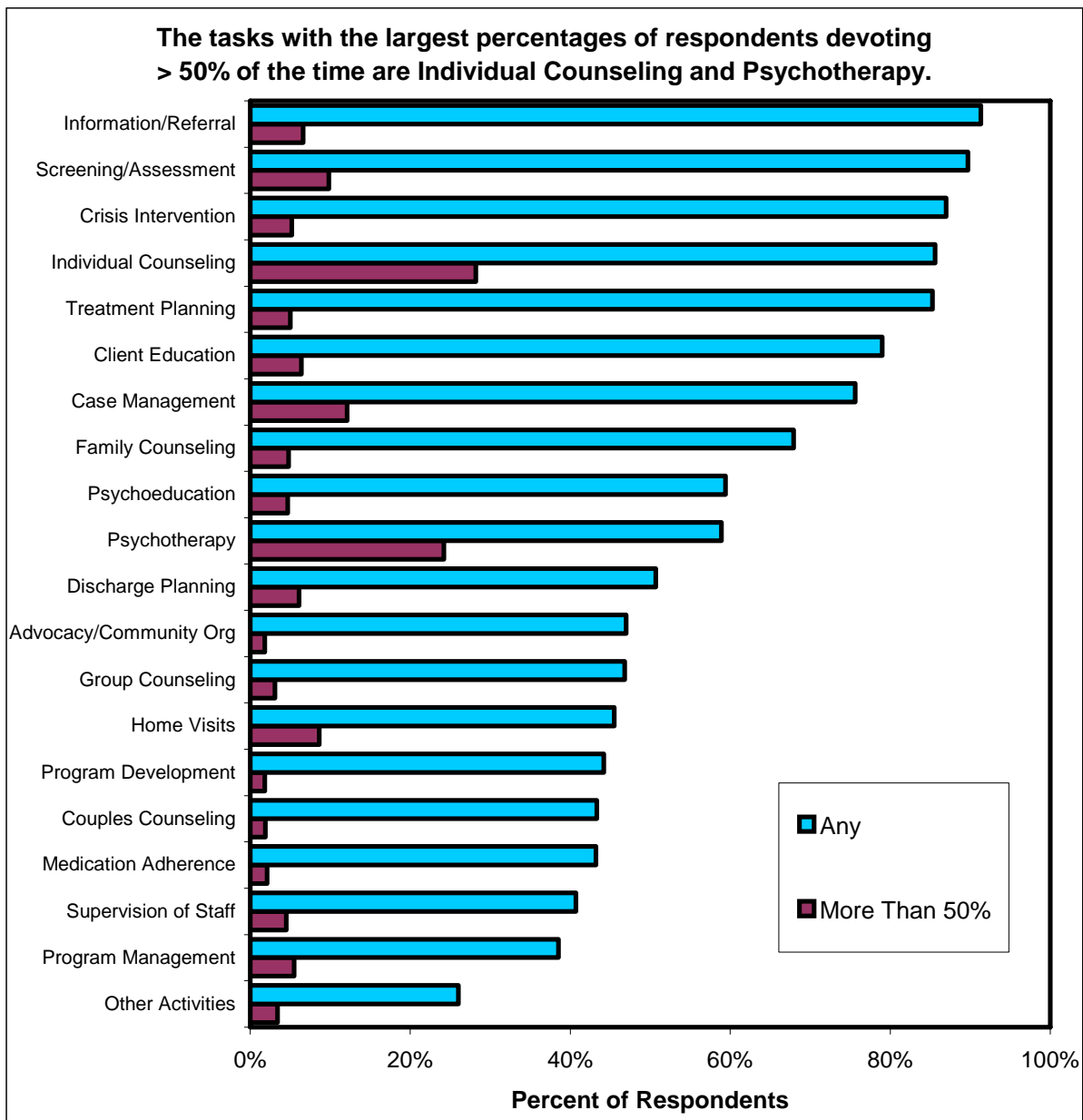
Figure 5. Percent of Social Workers Spending Any Time or 20 or More Hours per Week on Selected Roles, 2004



Tasks

Figure 6 shows that licensed social workers were most likely to be involved with the tasks of screening/ assessment (93%), information/referral (91%), crisis intervention (89%), individual counseling (86%), and client education (86%). These were not necessarily tasks on which they spend a majority of their time, however. There were only four tasks significant numbers of social workers report spending more than half of their time on: individual counseling (29%), psychotherapy (25%), case management (12%), and screening/assessment (10%). Fewer than 10% of social workers reported spending more than half their time on any other task.

Figure 6. Percent of Licensed Social Workers Spending Any Time or More Than Half Their Time on Selected Activities



Tasks By Gender

Women were more likely than men to spend at least some time on information/referral, screening/assessment, treatment planning, crisis intervention, case management, family counseling, medication adherence, advocacy/community organizing, client education, supervision of staff, discharge planning, and home visits. There were no social work tasks in which men were more likely to be involved than women.

There were also significant differences between male and female social workers in the percent of their time spent on social work tasks. Men spent significantly more time than women on couples counseling, psychotherapy, supervision of staff, and program management (although they are no more likely to perform these tasks). Women spent significantly more time than men on information/referral, screening/assessment, treatment planning, crisis intervention, advocacy/community organizing, psycho-education, client education, discharge planning, and home visits.

Tasks By Race/Ethnicity.

Hispanics were more likely than White social workers to have some involvement in crisis intervention (81% compared to 68%), case management (71% compared to 57%), and psycho-education (68% versus 58%). African-Americans were less likely than either Hispanics or Whites to have any involvement in psycho-education (28%). There were more pronounced differences, however, in terms of percent spent on these various tasks. Black/African American social workers devoted more of their time on average than White social workers to information/referral; screening/assessment; treatment planning; crisis intervention; case management; group counseling; advocacy/community organizing; client education; supervision of staff; program development; program management; and home visits. They devoted less of their time to psychotherapy. Similarly, Hispanic social workers devoted more of their time than White social workers to information/referral; screening/assessment; treatment planning; crisis intervention; and advocacy/community organizing. Asian social workers devoted more time than Whites to screening/assessment, treatment planning, and case management.

Tasks By Highest Social Work Degree

BSWs and MSWs did not significantly differ in the number of tasks they performed, but BSW and MSW tasks clearly differed, and the variation was more in terms of how much of certain tasks social workers performed than whether they were involved in a task or not. The five most common tasks for BSWs were: information/referral (97%), screening/assessment (91%), crisis intervention (86%), case management (85%), and client education (77%). In contrast, the five most common tasks for MSWs were information/referral (91%), screening/assessment (91%), crisis intervention (89%), individual counseling (89%), and treatment planning (88%).

For tasks on which social workers spent more than half their time, the differences became sharper. BSWs were most likely to spend more than half their time on case management (22%), home visits (18%), individual counseling (15%), information/referral (12%) and screening/assessment (12%). MSWs, on the other hand, were most likely to spend more than half their time on individual counseling (31%), psychotherapy (28%), case management (11%), and screening/assessment (10%).

Tasks by Setting.

Screening/assessment and information/referral appeared to be key tasks across all settings, but information/referral was less common among social workers in behavioral health clinics (86%), and screening/assessment was less common among those in social service agencies (84%). There was more variation in the performance of treatment planning and crisis intervention, but 80 to 95% of social workers in most settings devoted some time to this tasks. Social workers in social service agencies were less likely to do treatment planning (77%) than other social workers, while

social workers in schools were more likely to do crisis intervention (97%). Nursing home social workers were most likely to do some case management (94%), while social workers in behavioral health clinics were least likely (72%). Medication adherence was uncommon in social service agencies and schools, with 20% and 28% of social workers in these respective settings doing some, and was most common in psychiatric hospitals (71%) and health clinics (70%). Involvement in discharge planning was most common among social workers in nursing homes (96%), and least common among those in social service agencies (33%), while home visits were most common in hospice settings (98%) and least common in hospital settings (16%).

Counseling tasks varied more widely than other tasks, with social workers in social service agencies least likely to do all types of counseling, psychotherapy, and psycho-education. Individual counseling was most common in schools and hospices (both 94%), followed by behavioral health clinics and health clinics (both 93%). Group counseling, however, was most likely to occur in schools (78%) and psychiatric hospitals (74%), while family counseling was dramatically more likely to occur in hospice settings (94%) than any other setting. Couples counseling was slightly more common in hospice settings (53%) than in most other settings, followed by behavioral health clinics (51%). Psychotherapy and psycho-education were most common in behavioral health clinics, where 83% and 80% of social workers report spending time on these tasks, respectively. There was relatively little variation in the percent of social workers doing client education across settings (from 80% to 96%), except that social workers in social service agencies were less likely to perform this task (67%).

Advocacy and community organization was far more common in hospice settings (70%) than other settings, and was least common in behavioral health clinics (40%). Supervision of staff was performed by 61% of social workers in behavioral health clinics, but only 35% of those in schools. Both program development and program management were most common in nursing homes and behavioral health clinics (53% and 51% for program development and 47% and 48% for program management), but least common in hospices (33% and 30%).

There was also substantial variation in the percentage of time spent on these tasks by setting. Social workers in hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, and nursing homes spent more time on screening and assessment than any other task, while health clinic social workers spent more time on psychotherapy and behavioral health clinic social workers and school social workers spend more time on individual counseling than on other tasks. In social service agencies, case management was the most time-consuming task. Hospice social workers spent the most time on home visits.

Hours

Table 4 shows the numbers of primary employment and secondary employment hours worked in direct care for the same seven employment settings. Direct care hours represented a majority of employment hours for both primary and secondary employment (58.4% and 72.6%, respectively). It is interesting that respondents in private practice reported substantially fewer primary employment hours than respondents in other employment settings.

Table 4. Number of Hours, Total and Direct Care, Worked by Licensed Social Workers in Primary and Secondary Employment Settings, 2004

Employment Setting	n	Primary Employment Hrs			n	Secondary Employment Hrs		
		Total	Direct Care			Total	Direct Care	
			Hours	%			Hours	%
Private Practice	575	25.4	20.8	82.0%	289	8.1	7.1	87.9%
Health Care Org	1,052	36.2	23.3	64.2%	181	9.8	7.4	75.9%
Social Svc Org/ Svc	578	37.9	17.9	47.2%	81	9.0	6.3	70.2%
LTC Org/Svc	203	36.3	24.2	66.6%	45	8.8	6.8	76.6%
Child Org/Svc	370	36.7	22.8	62.0%	38	10.3	8.6	82.9%
Public Agency	212	37.0	16.0	43.4%	34	9.0	4.2	46.8%
Other	363	36.5	12.7	34.7%	199	8.2	3.9	47.6%
Total	3,353	34.8	20.3	58.4%	867	8.7	6.3	72.6%

Clients

The clients served by licensed social workers are an important aspect of their employment. The sections that follow describe the clients served by different subsets of survey respondents in terms of their demographics, their numbers, the conditions they have, and their health insurance coverage.

Client Demographics

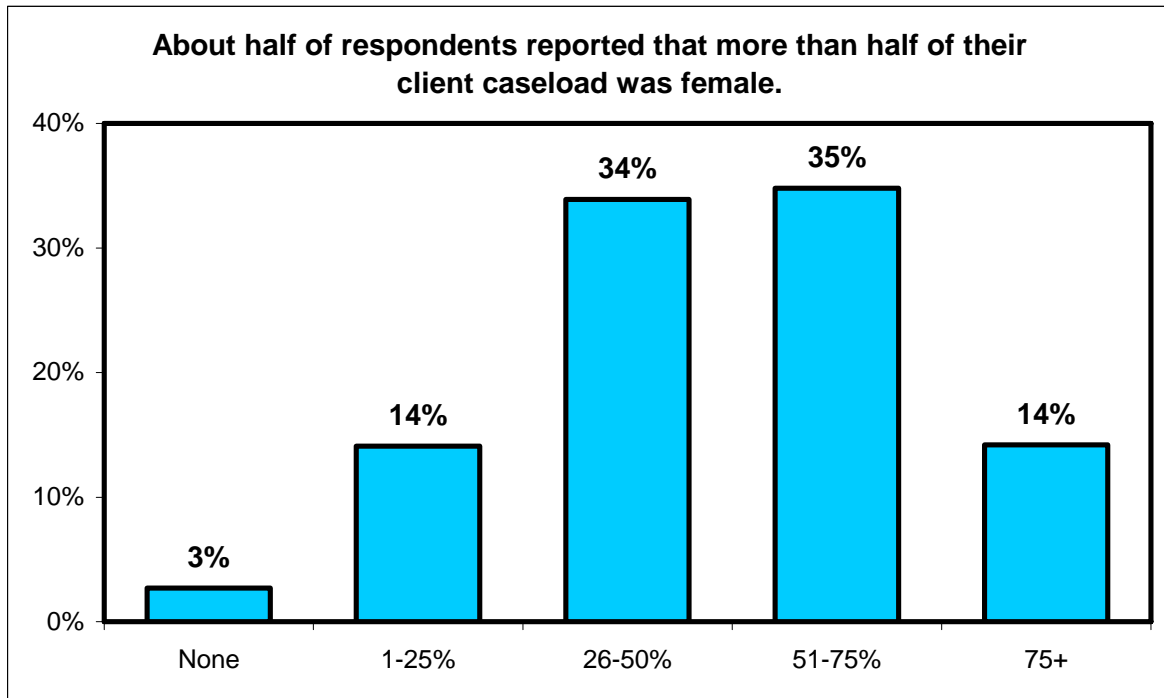
Perhaps the most fundamental characteristics of clients are their demographics. Client gender, age, and race-ethnicity are summarized below.

Gender

Figure 7 shows that more than half of social workers (51%) reported that their caseload¹ was 50% or fewer females (51% of the U.S. population is female), and 3% reported that they had no female clients at all. Only 14% of social workers worked in settings where their caseload was 75% or more female.

¹ Some social workers that did not have a caseload indicated “0%” for this question. These responses were removed so that data given here only reflects social workers with a current caseload.

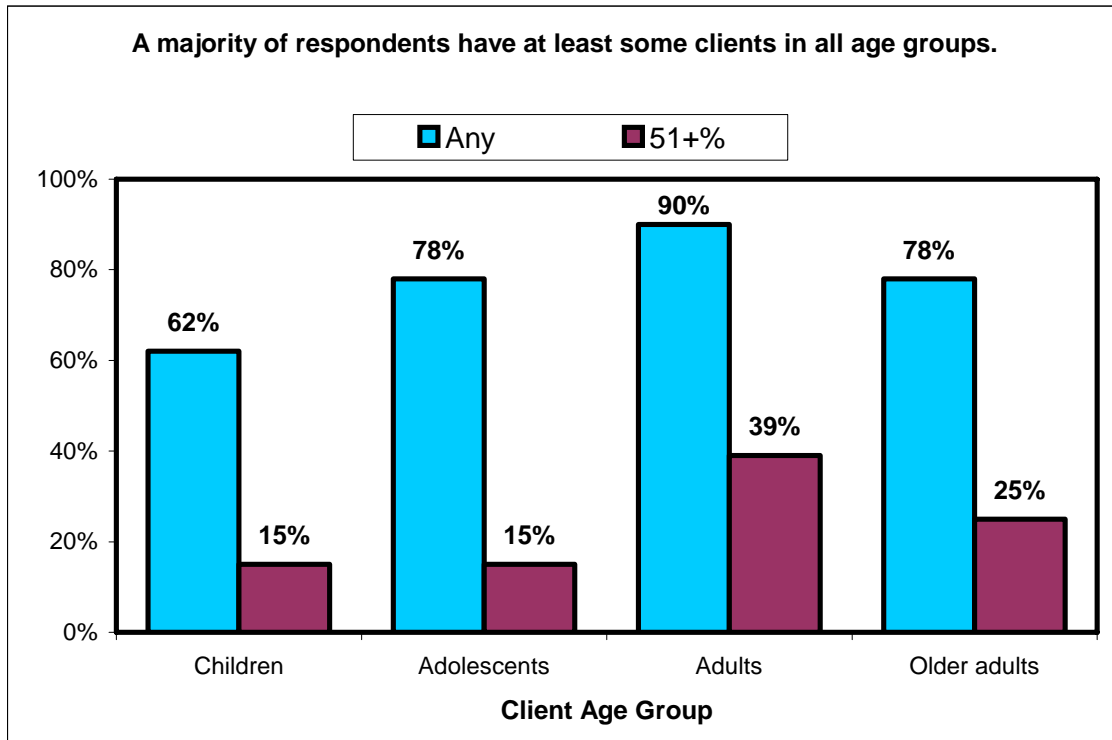
Figure 7. Percent of Caseload of Licensed Social Workers That is Female, 2004



Age

Figure 8 shows that 62% of social worker saw at least some clients ages 12 and under, and 15% saw a caseload predominantly (50% or more) composed of this age group. Seventy-eight percent saw at least some adolescent clients aged 13 to 21, and 15% saw a predominantly adolescent caseload. Seventy-eight percent saw at least some clients age 55 and over, and 25% saw a predominantly older adult caseload.

Figure 8. Percent of Caseload of Licensed Social Workers, by Client Age Group, 2004



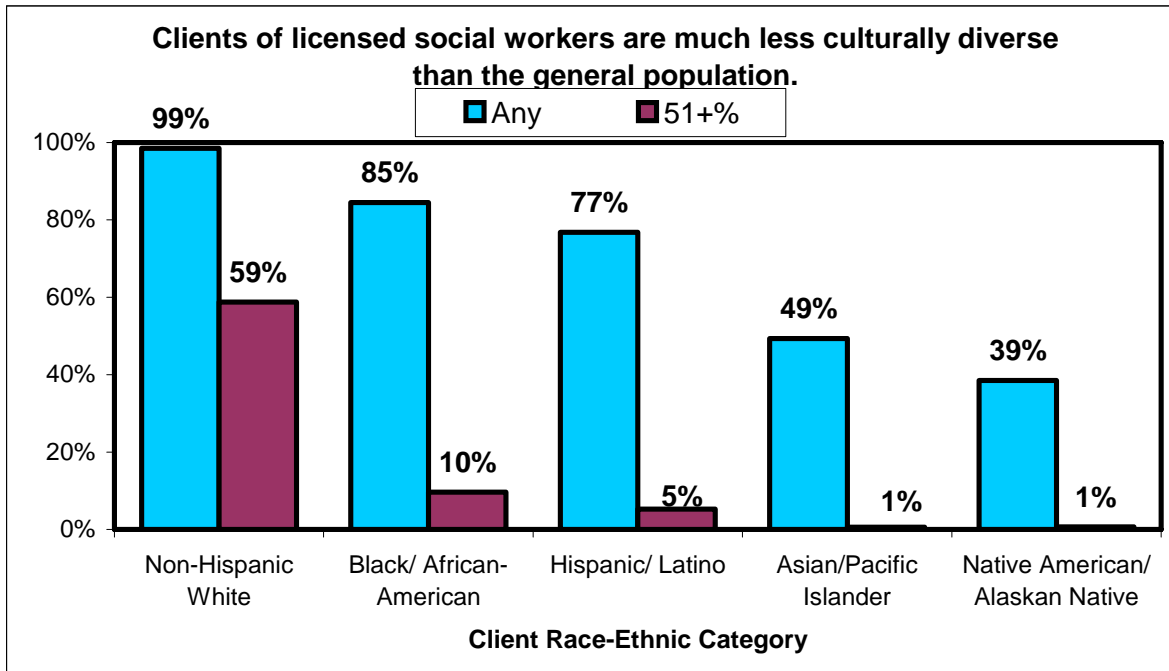
Female social workers saw significantly more children in their caseloads than male social workers, and male social workers saw significantly more adolescents and adults. There was not a significant gender difference in the percent of older adults in respondents' caseloads. Age of caseload does not appear to have differed by race/ethnicity or age of social worker.

Race/Ethnicity

Figure 9 shows that most licensed social workers saw a client base that was racially and ethnically diverse. Virtually all social workers (99%) saw at least some non-Hispanic white clients, and most saw some Black/African-American clients and Hispanic clients (85% and 77%, respectively). Fewer social workers saw any Asian clients (49%) or Native American clients (39%).

Forty-one percent of survey respondents reported that more than half of their caseload belonged to a non-White minority group. Still, few social workers saw caseloads that were predominantly (51% or more) composed of any single minority group. Ten percent of social workers saw caseloads that were predominantly Black/African American, and 5% saw caseloads that were predominantly Hispanic. Fewer than 1% saw caseloads that were predominantly Asian, Native American, or "other" race/ethnicity.

Figure 9. Percent of Caseload of Licensed Social Workers, by Client Race/Ethnic Category, 2004



Race/Ethnicity Of Caseload By Race/Ethnicity Of Social Worker

Licensed social workers in each of the racial-ethnic groups were more likely to report caseloads from their own racial/ethnic group. Thus, while 59% of all social workers carried caseloads that were more than half non-Hispanic White, among non-Hispanic White social workers the percent with non-Hispanic White clients increased to 63%. Similarly, only 10% of all licensed social workers saw predominantly African American caseloads, but this increased to 44% among African American social workers. Five percent of all social workers, but 42% of Hispanic social workers saw predominantly Hispanic caseloads, and 1% of social workers but 18% of Asian social workers saw predominantly Asian caseloads. Less than 1% of social workers saw predominantly Native American caseloads, but 31% of Native American social workers did.

Client Caseload

Over 90% of active licensed social workers reported having at least some client caseload, most through their primary employment setting. The size of caseload is summarized in Table 5, which shows the percentage of respondents with different caseloads for seven employment settings. Perhaps the most striking thing in Table 5 is the variation across the settings. It shows that respondents in Long Term Care Organizations and Child Service Organizations were most likely to have caseloads larger than 50 clients. It also shows that respondents in Other settings (i.e., business, insurance companies, etc.), Public Agencies, and Social Service Organizations were most likely to have no direct client caseload.

Table 5. Current Caseload of Licensed Social Workers, for Primary and Secondary Employment Settings, 2004

Employment Setting	Caseload									
	0	1-10	11-15	26-50	51-75	76-100	>100	Miss	Total	n
Primary										
Private Practice	0.9%	14.7%	22.2%	46.0%	8.2%	3.0%	3.6%	1.4%	100%	559
Health Care Org	6.9%	16.9%	18.0%	30.2%	9.3%	9.0%	8.4%	1.2%	100%	984
Social SVC Org/Svc	12.7%	19.8%	17.8%	30.3%	6.7%	6.5%	5.7%	0.6%	100%	495
LTC Org/Svc	1.6%	6.4%	11.7%	37.8%	19.7%	14.4%	8.0%	0.5%	100%	188
Child Org/Svc	3.8%	8.8%	13.5%	40.6%	10.5%	12.9%	8.8%	1.2%	100%	342
Public Agency	16.1%	13.4%	12.1%	34.9%	9.4%	6.0%	6.7%	1.3%	100%	149
Other	23.7%	21.0%	18.3%	20.2%	5.7%	4.6%	5.7%	0.8%	100%	262
Total	238	463	523	1,019	273	230	201	32	100%	2,979
Percent of Total	8.0%	15.5%	17.6%	34.2%	9.2%	7.7%	6.7%	1.1%	100%	
Secondary										
Secondary	0	1-10	11-15	26-50	51-75	76-100	>100	Miss	Total	n
Private Practice	4.4%	68.3%	18.1%	6.6%	1.1%	0.0%	3.6%	1.4%	100%	271
Health Care Org	19.1%	47.5%	19.8%	6.2%	1.9%	3.7%	8.4%	1.2%	100%	162
Social SVC Org/Svc	25.0%	47.2%	13.9%	6.9%	1.4%	2.8%	5.7%	0.6%	100%	72
LTC Org/Svc	10.8%	48.6%	18.9%	13.5%	5.4%	2.7%	8.0%	0.5%	100%	37
Child Org/Svc	8.8%	38.2%	32.4%	14.7%	5.9%	0.0%	8.8%	1.2%	100%	34
Public Agency	35.7%	42.9%	3.6%	10.7%	3.6%	0.0%	7.7%	1.3%	100%	28
Other	44.7%	27.6%	12.5%	8.6%	3.9%	1.3%	5.7%	0.8%	100%	152
Total	161	391	129	61	18	12	201	32	100%	756
Percent of Total	19.3%	50.4%	17.1%	7.8%	2.4%	1.5%	6.7%	1.1%	100%	

Note that the red and green shading in this table is for vertical comparisons.

Client Conditions

Table 6 shows that the percentages of respondents reporting different frequencies of selected conditions among their clients varied considerably. Few respondents reported that they had no clients with any of the conditions included on the questionnaire. The table reinforces the finding that licensed social workers deal with clients with a wide range of medical and mental health problems.

The variations in these patterns were even greater across different employment settings and practice areas, although it is difficult to summarize the results succinctly in tables and charts.

Table 6. Percentage of Clients with Selected Conditions

Client Condition	None	Few	Some	Many	n
Mental Illness	4.3%	25.5%	30.9%	39.2%	3,246
Affective Conditions	10.2%	26.3%	30.6%	32.9%	3,113
Neurological Conditions	19.9%	47.0%	26.3%	6.9%	3,035
Developmental Disabilities	25.2%	43.8%	20.6%	10.4%	3,088
Physical Disabilities	20.6%	41.8%	18.9%	18.7%	3,088
Substance Abuse Conditions	13.3%	30.5%	29.3%	26.8%	3,136
Acute Medical Conditions	21.1%	38.6%	19.9%	20.4%	3,045
Psychosocial stressors	1.9%	5.8%	16.0%	76.3%	3,229
Chronic Medical Conditions	12.0%	33.6%	26.1%	28.3%	3,124
Co-Occurring Conditions	4.3%	25.5%	30.9%	39.2%	3,246

Client Health Coverage

Health coverage is another important characteristic of the clients of social workers, with the extent of reimbursement often determining whether or not they actually receive services. Table 7 shows that Medicaid was the most common source of health coverage for the clients of survey respondents (40.7%), followed by Private Insurance (24.3%) and Medicare (16.4%).

Medicaid was the most common source of health coverage for clients of more than half of survey respondents in the practices areas of Child Welfare/Families (69.9%), Adolescents (55.7%), and School (51.3%). Medicare was the most common source health coverage for clients of respondents in Health (56.5%) and Aging (57.0%). Private Insurance was the most common source of health coverage for clients of respondents in Mental Health (42.4%). Almost one-third (32.5%) of clients of respondents in Addictions had no insurance.

Table 7. Percentages of Clients of Respondents in Selected Practice Areas with Selected Health Coverage

Practice Area (Specialty)	Most Common Source Client Health Coverage						Total
	Medicaid	Medicare	Private Insurance	Private Pay	Not Insured	Don't Know	
Mental Health	32.8%	6.7%	42.4%	7.9%	7.3%	2.9%	1,072
Health	24.6%	56.5%	9.7%	1.1%	6.8%	1.4%	370
Child Welfare/Family	69.9%	2.3%	14.0%	2.9%	3.8%	7.0%	342
Aging	36.3%	57.0%	0.8%	5.2%	0.0%	0.8%	251
School	51.3%	3.0%	17.8%	1.7%	3.5%	22.6%	230
Adolescents	55.7%	2.9%	21.8%	5.2%	5.7%	8.6%	174
Addictions	27.5%	1.3%	22.5%	12.5%	32.5%	3.8%	80
Other	43.1%	11.1%	20.3%	7.3%	10.3%	7.9%	592
Total	1,265	511	757	178	221	179	3,111
	40.7%	16.4%	24.3%	5.7%	7.1%	5.8%	100%

Salaries and Benefits

On average, wages/salaries of licensed social workers (working full time in social work for one employer in 2004) exceed those of social workers in general, as reported by BLS² (for 2003). The difference in median annual wages/salaries was between approximately \$7,500 and \$13,000, depending on the class of social worker.

Gender Gap

As is true in most professions, the survey responses revealed a gender gap in salaries for licensed social workers in 2004. The raw difference in average salaries for men and women working full-time in a single social work job was \$12,045, with 389 men reporting an average annual salary of \$61,040 and 1,744 women reporting \$48,995. Controlling for a number of other factors (including age, race, geographic area, highest social work degree, rural/urban setting, license required, size of caseload, vacancy patterns, practice area, employment sector, employment role, and years of experience), the average salary gap dropped to approximately \$7,052. Since the mean salary for these individuals was about \$51,192, the percentage gap was about 14%.

A number of the other variables included in the analysis of covariance model used to estimate the magnitude of the gender salary gap were also statistically significant, controlling for the influence of all the other variables in the model. Table 8 summarizes the nature of the relationship of these variables to the estimated salary levels of the respondents.

² BLS (2005)

Table 8. Variables with a Statistically Significant Relationship with Estimated Salaries of Licensed Social Workers Working Full Time in a Single Social Work Job

Variable	General Nature of the Relation to Salary Level
Gender (q2)	Males had higher salaries
Census Division (c10)	Pacific region had the highest salaries; South Central had the lowest
Highest SW Degree (c21)	DSWs had highest salaries; MSWs had second highest
Rural/Urban Location (c36)	Metropolitan areas had the highest salaries; rural areas had the lowest
Size of Primary Caseload (q30a)	No caseload had the highest salaries; 11-15 and 26-50 clients had lowest
Sector of Employment (c13)	Private practice had highest salaries; Private not-for-profit had lowest
# of SW Certifications (c27)	Two certifications had highest salaries; 6, 4, and 5 had the lowest
Years of Experience (c7)	Each year of experience was associated with about \$419 more salary

Rating of Compensation

Figures 10 and 11 provide ratings of wages and salaries of respondents working full time in social work, based on a four-point rating scale included in question 26 in the survey. This rating is provided in two formats, the first in Figure 15 as an average score based on the responses to the question by those in different salary groups, and the second in Figure 16 based on the percentage of respondents who rated their salary/wages either “very limited” or “limited”.

The former method shows a progressively higher average rating for higher salary categories, with the average rating for the lowest salary groups indicating an average rating of “limited”. The latter method shows that more than half of respondents working full time in social work earning less than \$35,000 per year rated their wages/salary as “very limited” or “limited”.

Ratings of fringe benefits are summarized in Table 9, which provides an average rating score for different numbers of benefits reported by respondents. The table shows that a majority of respondents with 0 or 1 or 2 benefits in their compensation packages rated their benefits “limited” or “very limited.” The table also shows that a majority of respondents with as many as 5 or 6 or 7 benefits in their compensation package rated their benefits as “adequate” or “very adequate”.

Figure 10. Ratings of Wages/Salaries of Licensed Social Workers, 2004

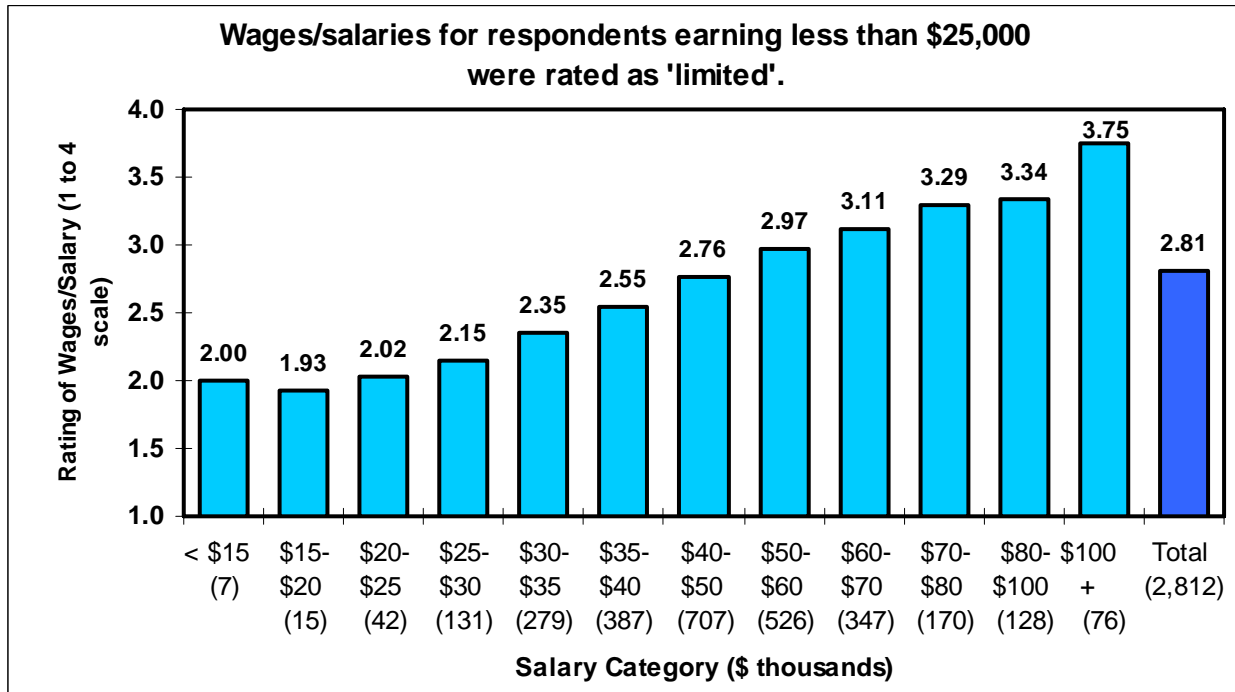


Figure 11. Percentage of Survey Respondents Rating Licensed Social Work Earnings as 'Very Limited' or Limited, 2004

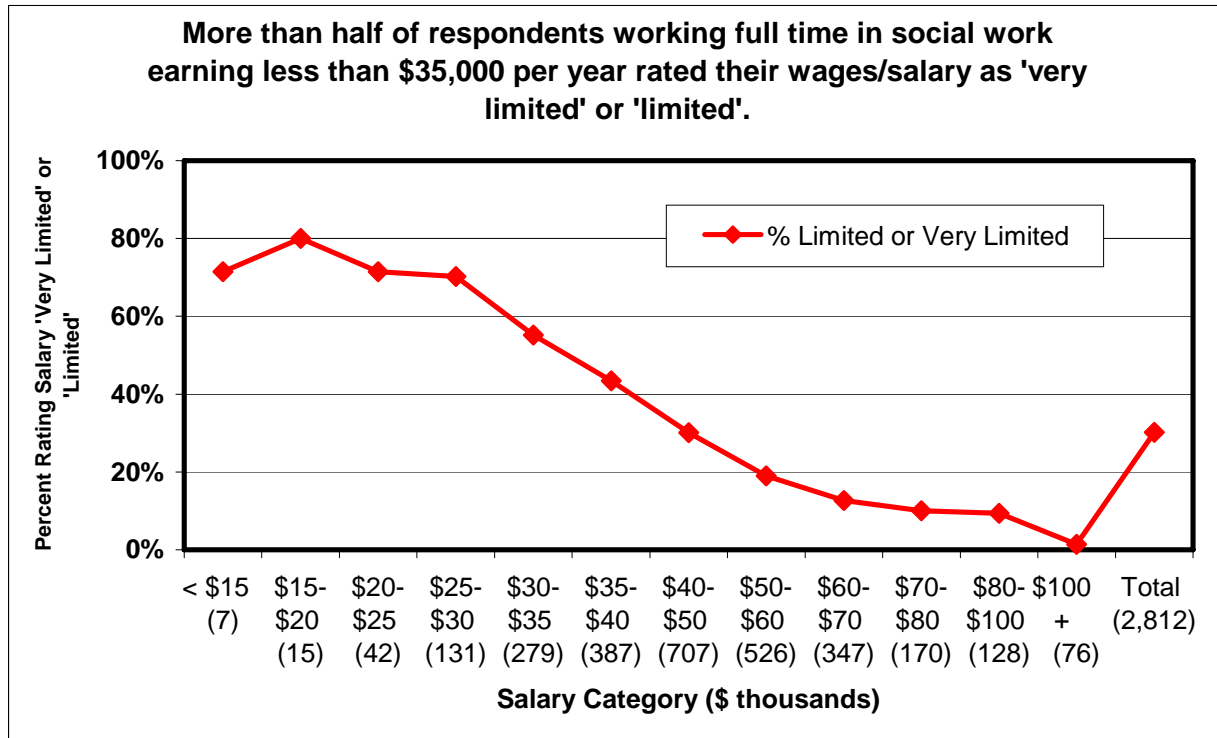


Table 9. Ratings of Benefits by Respondents Working Full Time in Social Work

Rating of Benefits	Number of Benefits								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Very Limited	77.8%	58.5%	12.7%	4.9%	1.1%	0.9%	0.6%	0.0%	12.0%
Limited	8.1%	24.2%	35.6%	27.5%	16.7%	6.2%	5.4%	0.0%	16.9%
Adequate	11.1%	15.0%	45.8%	55.0%	57.2%	60.4%	49.5%	46.2%	49.0%
Very Adequate	3.0%	2.3%	5.8%	12.6%	24.9%	32.5%	44.4%	53.8%	22.1%
Total	135	260	275	451	699	563	313	52	2,748

Comparisons with Other Professions

Table 10 shows that wages/salaries for licensed social workers varied by highest social work degree. Median wages/salaries in 2004 for active licensed social workers with BSW, MSW, and DSW degrees (highlighted in Table 10) were \$33,540, \$49,570, and \$65,700, respectively. These salary levels are comparable to those for other professions often compared with social workers (e.g., counselors, clergy, educators, librarians, and RNs).

Table 10. Comparative Wages for Social Workers and Selected Professions, as of 2003

BLS Code	Profession	Employed in 2003	Wage			
			25 th %ile	Mean	Median	75 th %ile
21-1011	Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors	64,900	\$25,330	\$33,580	\$31,500	\$39,470
21-1014	Mental Health Counselors	86,650	\$25,260	\$35,060	\$32,040	\$42,170
	Licensed Social Workers, BSW*	35,060	\$29,400	\$36,200	\$33,540	\$40,300
21-1023	Social Worker, Mental Health and Substance Abuse	102,110	\$26,790	\$35,860	\$33,650	\$43,030
21-1021	Social Worker, Child, Family, and School	252,870	\$27,370	\$37,190	\$34,300	\$44,460
21-2011	Clergy	37,630	\$25,450	\$38,410	\$34,930	\$47,190
21-1022	Social Worker, Medical and Public Health	103,040	\$30,900	\$40,540	\$39,160	\$49,010
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office Workers	1,402,290	\$30,940	\$42,960	\$39,920	\$51,910
25-4021	Librarians	151,650	\$35,500	\$46,140	\$44,730	\$55,880
21-1012	Educational, Vocational, and School Counselors	217,570	\$34,070	\$46,850	\$44,990	\$57,550
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Social & Voc Ed	1,033,020	\$36,050	\$47,810	\$45,180	\$57,160
	Licensed Social Workers, Any Degree*	255,000	\$36,910	\$49,970	\$46,660	\$58,830
	Licensed Social Workers, MSW*	233,560	\$35,521	\$52,900	\$49,570	\$60,198
29-1111	Registered Nurses	2,280,170	\$42,260	\$52,810	\$51,020	\$61,170
25-1067	Sociology Teachers, Postsecondary	13,890	\$40,310	\$58,720	\$53,870	\$71,220
25-1066	Psychology Teachers, Postsecondary	28,370	\$41,340	\$59,780	\$54,530	\$72,000
25-1052	Chemistry Teachers, Postsecondary	17,880	\$43,080	\$63,040	\$56,190	\$75,590
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	68,040	\$39,530	\$64,410	\$56,560	\$81,140
	Licensed Social Workers, DSW*	6,260	\$53,060	\$73,300	\$65,700	\$97,960

Sources: OES Statistics from BLS, from <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes210000.htm>

* CHWS/NASW Survey: Wage/salary estimates are for only those employed FT in SW for one employer in 2004

These figures suggest that, on average, the licensure process results in increased wages/salaries for social workers. They also indicate that earning advanced social work degrees results in higher wages/salaries. They also suggest that, because the BLS estimates include many of the higher paid licensed Social Workers, unlicensed social workers may earn even less than the BLS estimates would suggest. A more sophisticated analysis of salary structures and the roles and responsibilities of licensed social workers may reveal other factors that are important determinants of wage/salary levels of licensed social workers.

Urban/Rural Differences

Table 11 shows that the 19% of licensed social workers who work in micropolitan areas, rural areas, and small towns earned lower salaries than those in metropolitan areas. The reason for the differences cannot be determined from the survey data, but some of the difference is undoubtedly attributable to differences in costs of living.

Table 11. Salaries of Licensed Social Workers by Rural/Urban Location, 2004

Gross SW Salary Category	Rural/Urban Status of Primary Setting				Total
	Metropolitan Area	Micropolitan Area	Small Town	Rural Area	
< \$15,000	0.1%	0.7%	0.0%	1.5%	6
\$15,000 - \$19,999	0.3%	1.5%	0.0%	1.5%	12
\$20,000 - \$24,999	1.3%	1.1%	3.8%	3.1%	38
\$25,000 - \$29,999	4.0%	7.4%	8.8%	12.3%	124
\$30,000 - \$34,999	7.9%	16.0%	18.8%	21.5%	250
\$35,000 - \$39,999	12.3%	18.6%	21.9%	18.5%	350
\$40,000 - \$49,999	25.8%	24.9%	28.1%	23.1%	657
\$50,000 - \$59,999	19.5%	17.8%	8.8%	10.8%	470
\$60,000 - \$69,999	13.7%	7.1%	6.9%	1.5%	312
\$70,000 - \$79,999	7.0%	1.1%	1.9%	1.5%	151
\$80,000 - \$99,999	4.9%	2.6%	0.6%	3.1%	110
\$100,000 +	3.2%	1.1%	0.6%	1.5%	71
Total Respondents	2057	269	160	65	2,551
% of Total	80.6%	10.5%	6.3%	2.5%	100%
Median Salary	\$49,311	\$42,160	\$39,014	\$38,171	\$47,820