

Community Service Worker

Sit with people on the worst day of their life and help them find food, housing, income and a way forward.

TYPICAL PAY

\$54,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$75k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Shelters, group homes, drop-in centres, community agencies

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Grade 12 English is the usual admission requirement. Volunteer hours at a food bank, camp or drop-in centre matter more than your marks.
- 2 College program** 1 to 2 years
A 1-year Community Service Worker certificate or a 2-year Social Service Worker diploma at a college such as George Brown, Humber, Mohawk, Red River or Douglas.
- 3 Field placement** Built into the program
Several hundred unpaid hours inside a real agency. Most graduates get their first job where they placed.
- 4 Clearances and first job** Weeks
A police record check with vulnerable sector screening, first aid and CPR, and often crisis intervention training.
- 5 Optional: upgrade later** 2 to 4 more years
A Bachelor of Social Work is the usual next step if you want hospital work, clinical counselling or higher pay.

Pros and cons

- + Cheapest and fastest way into serious helping work
- + Hired almost everywhere, in every town
- + You see the result of your work in real people
- Pay stays low unless you go back to school
- Contracts end when grants end
- Burnout and second-hand trauma are common, not rare

Good to know

Most of the sector is tiny charities

Canada has tens of thousands of registered charities and most of them run on very small budgets. That is why so many community jobs are one-year contracts: the job lasts exactly as long as the grant beh...

Ontario made the title a legal one

Ontario has a regulatory college that registers social service workers as well as social workers. Using the title Registered Social Service Worker there without registering is against the law.

Optional boosts

Addictions and mental health certificate. Crisis intervention training. Naloxone and overdose response. Bachelor of Social Work.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Community service worker, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers
Canadian Association of Social Workers
alis Alberta: Social Worker occupation profile

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/community-service-worker>



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