

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program



UConn School of Social Work

Paula Nieman, PhD, MSW, LCSW

Director, UConn BSW Program

paula.nieman@uconn.edu

Kathy Birnie, LMSW

**Admission Coordinator, Office of Student & Academic
Services**

kathy.birnie@uconn.edu

Mission of the Social Work Profession

- The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.
- **A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society.**
- Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.



Social workers attend to
human needs throughout the
lifespan.

Social workers offer support, advocacy, resources, and collaborative problem-solving to communities and people in need.

- Micro Level: individual-level change
- Mezzo Level: family or group-level change
- Macro Level: change at the organization, community, or policy level



Social workers are employed in a wide range of workplaces.

**hospitals
schools
criminal justice settings
family & children's services
libraries
detox and rehab programs
community centers
government/legislative offices
courts
nursing homes & assisted living
international agencies and NGOs
advocacy organizations
mental health programs
military settings**





Social work is a growing profession.

- There were more than **751,900** social work jobs in 2023, and the profession is **expected to grow by more than 7% by 2033.** (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>)
- Federal law and the National Institutes of Health recognize social work as **one of five core mental health professions.**
- Professional social workers are the **largest group of mental health providers in the U.S.** There are more clinically trained social workers—over 200,000—than psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses combined.
- There are hundreds of social workers in national, state and local elected offices.



**Helping a
student decide:**

**Is social work
for me?**

- Am I a “people person”?
- Can I readily see strengths, resources, and capabilities in people and in communities?
- Do I like to apply my learning to “real-world” issues and problems?
- Do I recognize the connections between individual peoples’ challenges and broader social and economic issues and inequities?
- Am I interested in working for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice?



... and ultimately....

Do I want a meaningful
career where I can truly
make a difference?

Do I want to change the world?



Examples of related majors:

- HDFS
- Psychology
- WGSS
- Political Science
- Sociology
- Urban & Community Studies
- Human Rights



The BSW is a **professional degree**, bringing together a general education foundation, social work coursework, and applied, **hands-on learning**.

The BSW prepares students for the **workforce and for graduate study**.



General Education

*Foundation of
general knowledge
and skills*

Social work courses



*Curriculum to build
knowledge and skills in
generalist social work
practice*



Practicum Education

*400+ hours of supervised
hands-on learning in
internship*

Practicum Education: Linking theory and practice

- Hands-on learning is **INTEGRATED** into the **BSW curriculum**.
- Students spend 203 hours/semester in their senior year (approx. 14 hours/week) gaining *hands-on social work practice experience*.
- Placements are coordinated by the Practicum Education Dept. and students are enrolled in a seminar course each semester, to support their practicum learning.



BSW Scholarship/Stipend Programs



Child Advocacy Center

Trains BSW students to reduce child abuse and generational trauma in children and youth.

Requirements: HBEL 5381 and senior practicum at a Connecticut Child Advocacy Center.



Child Welfare Protection

Equips Spanish-speaking students with child welfare training to work with Connecticut's Latino/a/e families served by DCF.

Begins spring semester of junior year.



Scholars in Aging

Prepares students to work with adults 65+ through focused coursework, practicum, and seminars.

Requirements: HBEL 5357 and senior practicum with older adults.

Many possible paths after earning a BSW

Graduate study

- **MSW via *Advanced Standing***
(accelerated MSW for BSWs only)
- **Other graduate degrees or dual degrees**
 - MPH, MEd, MDiv, MPA, etc.
 - Dual degree programs with MSW



Service

- AmeriCorps
- Peace Corps etc.

Social work workforce

- case manager with elderly
- DCF caseworker
- residential counselor
- community outreach worker, etc.

* no license required in CT for BSW positions

The BSW is offered on the Hartford Campus

- The BSW program is in the School of Social Work, along with MSW and PhD programs.
- Accepted applicants will have their campus changed to the Hartford regional campus.
- Students commute 2 days/wk for SOWK classes.
- Students may commute from home, from Storrs/Stamford (off-campus housing), or other regional campus.
- Starting in fall 2026, student housing will be available on the Hartford campus.



NO Required Prerequisite Courses

BUT completion of most/all General Education requirements prior to beginning the BSW program is strongly recommended

Helpful courses include:

- Content related to **human development and human behavior** (e.g., HDFS, Psychology)
- Content related to **social problems & social policy** (e.g., Sociology, Political Science, Public Policy)
- Content related to **human rights and social justice**
- Content related to **diversity** (e.g., CA4 courses, e.g., WGSS, Sociology, HDFS)
- Fluency with other **languages** (ASL, Spanish, any other language)

* And ANY areas of **student interest or passion**



Pre-BSW or potential BSW students may take SOWK 2000

Considering a Social Justice-Focused Career in:

- ?**
- **Social Work**
 - **Counseling or Human Services**
 - **Community Organizing or Advocacy**
- ?**



Register for Fall 2025 course

SOWK 2000

Social Justice for the Social Work Profession

Open to all UConn Undergraduates!

Multiple Sections: Tuesdays or Thursdays 4:00-6:30pm

Satisfies CA2, TOI-3, & TOI-5 requirements

Questions?

Contact paula.nieman@uconn.edu



Admission pathway for UConn students



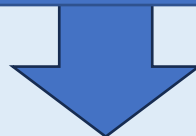
Apply to UConn.
Enter as a first-year student (ACES, ACES pre-social work, or other major).



Take Gen Ed courses & courses of interest.
Earn at least 54 credits (60+ credits, if possible).
Maintain at least a 2.5 GPA.



Apply to the BSW program (usually winter of sophomore year).



UCONN | SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**Electronic submission of application materials
(typically November 15-February 15)**

BSW Program Application

<https://ssw.uconn.edu/apply-for-bsw/>

- References (2)
- Personal Statement (3 pg. essay)
- Resume
- Unofficial Transcript

Applications submitted after the deadline will be considered on a space available basis.



The “elevator pitch”

- **Be a change-maker! Help to create change – for individuals, families, communities and the world!**
- **Hands-on learning (400+ hour practicum) is built into the curriculum, so students gain real-world practice experience.**
- **VERY broad range of career opportunities – both within and beyond the social work profession.**
- **Opens the possibility of an accelerated (1 year) path to the MSW via advanced standing.**

Questions?

Paula Nieman

paula.nieman@uconn.edu

"You must be the change you

h to see in the world."

Be the
CHANGE
—you wish
to see in the
WORLD