Are you searching for meaning, action, and diversity in your life, and are you prepared to make an impact? Do you have passion, intelligence, and a history of service, and are you ready to commit yourself to social justice? Get involved. And be one of the more than half million professional social workers in the United States dedicated to strengthening vulnerable families. Because, why not you?

Our program emphasizes utilizing the latest research to inform best practice, understanding the reciprocal interactions of people and their social environment, and respecting diversity. You have the ability—we’ll give you the resources—to be the force of change in the world. Currently, a degree in social work is one of the most marketable in the country, and the Department of Labor projects significant job growth in the future. Few occupations can compete with it, as a degree in social work offers a broad range of opportunities.

With a degree in social work, you can fulfill your career goals in a variety of settings. In Social Work Generalist Practice, you assist people who become eligible for services designed to improve their economic, social and/or health functioning. You administer established services through public or private community agencies and organizations.

Be the strength for someone else.

As a Medical Social Worker, you help patients and their families cope with the problems that can accompany illness or inhibit recovery and rehabilitation, such as disability or lack of resources. You collect and analyze patient information to help other health professionals understand the social, emotional, and environmental factors underlying a patient’s condition or affecting their optimal recovery. For example, you might provide referral services and supportive counseling, or coordinate after-care and follow-up services.

Be a healer.

As a School Social Worker, and help students and families overcome the social, behavior, emotional, or economic problems that may prevent a child’s success at school. You will interview students to determine problems, use professional judgment to assess conditions, refer the family to appropriate professional or community services, and follow up to assure that services are provided and that conditions improve.

Be a mentor.

As a Community Organization Social Worker, you work to improve systems and develop new resources so that more people in the community will have access to the services they need to function at their best. You have the opportunity to work for or with governmental, private, or community groups and organizations to determine community needs and to recommend and develop new resources.

Be a leader.

You can be a person for others as a Mental Health Social Worker, providing a full range of services, including assessment and treatment. Drawing on a variety of psychotherapeutic theories and models, you will help individuals, couples, families, and groups deal with emotional problems, mental disorders, and substance abuse or chemical dependency.

Be compassionate.

As a social worker in Administration and Management, you oversee the provision of public and private social service programs. You know and understand the mission of the organization, and administer the resources and finances necessary to make the program operate effectively, with the ultimate goal of helping people in need.

Be an agent of change.

In the area of Social Policy, you will plan and implement interventions with an emphasis on changing policies and advocating to reform social conditions. As an expert in social policy practices, you have the responsibility of leading the implementation of social policy projects.

Be inspirational.

As a Social Work Researcher, you are committed to and engaged in research that measures the effectiveness of agency or program operations, as well as examine the implications of larger social problems such as poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse. You analyze the results and use your findings to recommend ways to improve social policies and conditions.

Be a pioneer.

As a Child Welfare Worker, and help support families and protect children from harm. You administer case management, foster care, and adoption services to vulnerable children and families through nonprofit and public agencies. Using your assessment skills, you determine the best environment in which the child can thrive, as well as arrange educational services so families are better equipped to deal with stressors they may face.

Be an advocate.
Many School of Social Work students are supported by research and educational projects in the Children and Family Research Center, created in 1996 by our School of Social Work and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

The Children and Family Research Center is dedicated to supporting and conducting research that contributes to keeping children safe, assuring permanent homes for children, and supporting child and family well-being. The mission of the Center is to:

- Study the needs of children and families in their social context
- Monitor the achievement of child welfare outcomes
- Evaluate service demonstrations and system reforms
- Audit programs to ensure service quality and efficiency
- Provide training and consultation to advance best practice
- Disseminate knowledge on research-based practice

**SPECIAL PROJECT: FOSTER YOUTH SEEN AND HEARD (FYSH)**

One of the goals at the Center is to recognize special challenges for the child welfare community and to explore possibilities for addressing those issues. To assist older youth in their transition to adulthood, the Center created FYSH, an ongoing program that seeks to engage foster youth in the process of writing their personal narratives. Participants meet at the Center each week to discuss the challenges they face within the child welfare system, and to produce individual pieces of prose or poetry that speak to their experiences as foster children. The messages in their writing play a part in impacting the research agenda at the Center, as well as child welfare policy and practice.

To learn more about the FYSH program and the Children and Family Research Center, visit www.socialwork.uiuc.edu

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**The Children and Family Research Center**

**BE AN ADVOCATE**

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**My graduate work at the School of Social Work in the early nineties gave me an advanced degree which has made me marketable in the employment field. It also gave me a solid background in relevant research, a skill which I apply to help individuals in my community. Friendships made in graduate school enriched my life then and continue to the present. The knowledge and skills learned in the School of Social Work process do not need to end with our degrees, but can continue through a partnership of mutual support.**

**BARBARA ROBERTS, MSW** 1993
Building on 60 years of excellence, we seek to be a preeminent school of social work through our teaching and research which exemplifies public engagement for social and economic justice.