



# ...And Social Justice for All: How Can Librarians and Social Workers Collaborate?

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# What Do Social Workers Do?



## MICRO PRACTICE: “ON THE GROUND”

- Work with individuals and families
- Manage case work:
  - Meet with clients
  - Connect them to appropriate social service agencies
- Provide service through non-profits, counties, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, etc...
- Work in private practice

## MACRO PRACTICE: “BIG PICTURE”

- Work with groups, systems
- Engage in policymaking, organizing, administration
- Work at non-profits, state agencies, community groups at a level above direct service
- Provide consulting services

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“Libraries are on the front line, whether they want to [be] or not.”

- Jeremy Rosen, director of advocacy at the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty

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# Librarians Provide



## ACCESS TO CLIENTS

- Libraries are the initial point of access for people from all walks of life
- Urban libraries in particular are gathering places for people most in need of social services

## INFORMATION NAVIGATION

- Social workers may build their information networks through relationships, rather than organized searching
- Social workers may not be trained on information literacy

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## Libraries with Social Workers

- San Francisco Public Library
- Edmonton Public Library
- Washington DC Public Library
- Denver Public Library
- Dallas Public Library
- San Jose Public Library & San Jose State University
- Bonus: Dominican University has a joint MLIS/MSW program

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# Social Workers Provide

## SUPPORT FOR PATRONS

- Referrals
- Case file access
- Welcoming atmosphere
- Job search assistance
- On-site social services

## SUPPORT FOR STAFF

- Crisis management
- Problem solving
- Reflection and counseling post-crisis
- Training on self-care, boundary setting, mental health, homelessness

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# Together We Can...

Librarians aren't social workers.

We don't need to be social workers.

We can work together and learn from each other.

We can celebrate our common history and shared social justice goals.

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# Ongoing Questions

- Where do we draw the boundary between what librarians do and what social workers do?
- Where do we welcome overlap?
- What can we learn from social work theory and practice?
- What do we have to offer social workers?

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