

# Social/Community Service Manager

## Snapshot

**Career Cluster(s):** Government & Public Administration; Human Services

**Interests:** Human welfare; social assistance; charitable work

**Earnings (Yearly Average):** \$67,150

**Employment & Outlook:** Much Faster Than Average Growth Expected

## OVERVIEW

### Sphere of Work

Social and community service managers coordinate and supervise programs and organizations that support public and animal well-being. They direct workers who provide these services to the public and may also own the organizations facilitating these services.

### Work Environment

Social and community service managers primarily work in offices, but may also work in settings such as clinics, hospitals, and shelters. Most social and community service managers work full-time. Some work more than 40 hours per week. Owners may have irregular schedules depending on their



A woman leads her team at a local food bank. Photo via iStock.com/SDI Productions. [Used under license.]

role(s) within the organization and the nature of the services provided.

### **Occupation Interest**

Social and community service managers have a strong desire to help others, whether people or animals. They also possess strong business skills to lead their organization and direct their employees.

### **A Day in the Life—Duties and Responsibilities**

Social and community service managers work for a variety of organizations. Some of these organizations focus on working with a particular demographic, such as children, people who are homeless, older adults, or veterans. Others focus on helping people with challenges, such as substance abuse, mental health needs, and chronic hunger. Still others focus on helping animals by providing shelter and rehoming services or overseeing special interests such as livestock.

A routine part of social and community service managers' job is to show that their programs and services are effective. They collect statistics and other information to evaluate the impact their programs have on the community or their target audience. They are usually required to report this information to administrators or funders. They may also use evaluations to identify opportunities to improve their programs, such as providing mentorship and assessments for their staff.

### **Profile**

**Interests:** People, Animals, Data

**Working Conditions:** Inside

**Education Needs:** Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree

**Licensure/Certification:** Not Required

**Opportunities for Experience:** Internship, Volunteer Work

**Interest Score:** ES

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

- Working with community members and other stakeholders to identify necessary programs and services
- Overseeing administrative aspects of programs to meet the objectives of the stakeholders
- Analyzing data to determine the effectiveness of programs
- Suggesting and implementing improvements to programs and services
- Planning and managing outreach activities for increased awareness of programs
- Writing proposals for social services funding

Although the specific job duties of social and community service managers may vary with the size and scope of the organization, most managers recruit, hire, and train new staff members. They also supervise staff, such as social workers, who provide services directly to clients. Additionally, they may perform some of the services of the workers they oversee.

In large agencies, social and community service managers tend to have specialized duties. They may be responsible for running only one program in an organization

and reporting to the agency's upper management. They usually do not design programs but instead supervise and implement programs set up by administrators, elected officials, or other stakeholders.

In small organizations, social and community managers often have many roles. They represent their organization through public speaking engagements or in community-wide committees; oversee programs and execute their implementations; spend time on administrative tasks, such as managing budgets; and help with raising funds and meeting with potential donors.

Owners must be able to juggle these responsibilities with the day-to-day duties of running of a business, such as payroll and overseeing physical locations used by the organization.

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

### **Immediate Physical Environment**

Social and community service managers work for nonprofit organizations, for-profit social service companies, and government agencies. They also work in a variety of settings, including offices, clinics, hospitals, and shelters. Health and safety precautions must be followed when in the latter settings.

### **Human Environment**

By the very nature of their work, social and community service managers are in close contact with people throughout their workdays. They must have strong leadership abilities to oversee and direct their team and be comfortable reporting to senior administrators or stakeholders. They may also come into contact with the clients their organization supports, which could include people with challenges such as substance abuse and mental health needs. There could also be a fundraising component to their work, requiring them to meet with donors, or write and submit grant proposals.

### **Technological Environment**

Social and community service managers must be proficient at computer programs such as word processors and spreadsheet platforms, as well as databases, in order to prepare reports, track statistics, and perform administrative duties.

## EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND ADVANCEMENT

### High School/Secondary

High school students seeking a career in social or community services should take courses related to sociology and psychology, as well as English and other languages if offered. It is also highly beneficial to seek out volunteer work at the types of organizations they would one day like to work for and manage. It is worth noting that one's career path into nonprofit work does not have to be linear. An interest in journalism and communications can facilitate a path into nonprofit work, for instance, so students should pursue subjects that they are most interested in, with an eye for how that may one day translate into the desired nonprofit work.

#### Suggested High School Subjects

- Accounting
- Biology
- Civics
- Earth or Life or Physical Science
- Economics
- English
- Entrepreneurship
- History
- Psychology
- Statistics

#### Related Career Pathways/Majors

##### *Government & Public Administration*

###### *Career Cluster*

- Planning Pathway
- Public Management & Administration Pathway

##### *Human Services Career Cluster*

- Counseling & Mental Health Services Pathway
- Early Childhood Development & Services Pathway
- Family & Community Services Pathway
- Personal Care Services Pathway

### Transferable Skills and Abilities

#### Analytical Skills

- Understanding and evaluating data to provide strategic guidance
- Monitoring and assessing current programs as well as determining new initiatives

#### Communication Skills

- Speaking and writing clearly, including public speaking

#### Managerial Skills

- Administering budgets and responding to a variety of issues

#### Problem-solving Skills

- Addressing client, staff, and agency-related issues

#### Time-management Skills

- Prioritizing and handling numerous tasks, often in a short timeframe

### **Postsecondary**

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Social and community service manager jobs typically require a bachelor's degree in social work, public or business administration, public health, or a related field. However, some positions also require a master's degree.

### **Related College Majors**

- Business Administration
- Public Administration
- Public Health
- Social Work

### **Additional Requirements**

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Workers usually need experience to become a social and community service manager, and it is essential for those with a bachelor's degree. Candidates can get this experience by working as a social worker, substance abuse counselor, or in a similar occupation. Volunteer positions are also a great way to gain experience and make contacts.

## **EARNINGS AND ADVANCEMENT**

Earnings of social and community service managers depend on the type of employer, the type of job, and the education and experience of the employee. Earnings also depend on whether the manager also owns the organization. The median annual wage for social and community service manager was \$67,150 in 2019. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$41,220, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$112,480.

Social and community service managers may receive paid vacations, holidays, and sick days; life and health insurance; and retirement benefits. These are usually paid by an employer.

These types of organizations often prefer to hire internally, so students and workers can aim to climb the ladder through dedication and years of experience.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND OUTLOOK**

Social and community service managers held about 175,500 jobs nationally in 2019. Twenty-nine percent worked in individual and family services. The re-

## Fast Fact

You've heard about the entrepreneur who started the business out of her dorm room? Here are some 2016 stats to back that up: 36 percent of student entrepreneurs started a business during studies, and 21 percent of graduates launched due to unemployment.

Source: entrepreneurship.com



For industrious young entrepreneurs, it's possible to start your own business while still in college, working out of your dorm room. Photo via iStock.com/Prostock-Studio. [Used under license.]

mainder worked in areas such as religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations; nursing and residential care; local government; and community and vocational rehabilitation services.

Employment is expected to grow much faster than average through the year 2029, with a projected increase of 17 percent. Much of the job growth in this occupation is the result of an aging population. An increase in the number of older adults will result in a need for more social services, such as adult daycare and vocational services, creating demand for social and community service managers. Employment of social and community service managers is expected to increase the most in industries serving older adults.

In addition, employment growth is projected as people continue to seek treatment for their addictions and as people with substance abuse disorders are increasingly sent to treatment programs rather than to jail. As a result, managers who direct treatment programs will be needed.

### Related Occupations

- Health Educator/Community Health Worker
- Marriage/Family Therapist
- Medical/Health Services Manager
- Probation Officer/Correctional Treatment Specialist
- Rehabilitation Counselor
- School/Career Counselor
- Social/Human Service Assistant
- Social Worker
- Substance Abuse/Behavioral Disorder/Mental Health Counselor

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**MORE INFORMATION**

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**Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)**

333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 400

Alexandria, VA 22314

703.683.8080

[info@cswe.org](mailto:info@cswe.org)

[www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org)

**National Association of Social Workers (NASW)**

750 First Street, NE Suite 800

Washington, DC 20002

800.742.4089

[membership@socialworkers.org](mailto:membership@socialworkers.org)

[www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)

**Network for Social Work Management (NSWM)**

c/o Special Service for Groups

905 E. 8th Street

Los Angeles, CA 90021

213.553.1870

[info@socialworkmanager.org](mailto:info@socialworkmanager.org)

[socialworkmanager.org](http://socialworkmanager.org)

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*Stuart Paterson*



*Conversation With...*

**STEPHANIE PEREIRA**

Director, NEW INC  
at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, NY  
Arts and culture business, 20 years

**What was your individual career path in terms of education/training, entry-level job, or other significant opportunity?**

School was tough for me; I didn't fit in to the traditional school model. For undergraduate studies, I went to art school because that felt like a place where I could go to college and still be happy. I went to the Mason Gross School of Arts at Rutgers University, flourished, and earned my BFA in Visual Art.

Art school was important because they teach you how to think like an artist, which is a creative and lateral way of thinking. It has really served me well. I love artists, have lived with artists, and want to spend the rest of my life helping artists make art.

I went to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and earned an MA in Arts Administration. It was great. At that time, I wanted to work in a museum and did my thesis on how museums don't serve their local communities; they serve the art community. My thesis adviser told me museums were not interested in what I was talking about. But she knew someone who ran a nonprofit that placed working artists in schools, so I did a summer internship with them. The ethos was very much in the spirit of what I was writing and thinking about, and I worked two years for Chicago Arts Partnership in Education.

Then I returned to New York to do the same work for a larger organization. But I also realized I didn't want to be sitting in a cubicle so, at age 27 with no kids, no car, and deferred college loan debt, I quit my job and started doing volunteer projects that inspired me. I called up the curator of the New Museum who asked me to be an assistant. I started a CSA and worked on a festival. In the end, I earned \$12,000 and lived on rice and beans for a year and a half, but it was one of the best experiences I could have had. By the time I landed a job at Eyebeam Art + Technology Center in New York, they hired me, in part, because of the projects I'd been working on. By the time I left, I was running all their youth and adult education programming. Then I went to Kickstarter, where I spent 6 years as the inaugural Director of Arts and left as Director of Creative Engagement with oversight of strategic growth and management of a global community of more than 100,000 people.

At NEW INC, our a-ha moment came because New York City graduates more artists and designers than anywhere else, but these people don't have a basic business education. What we've learned is that a basic business education doesn't center around the needs and values of creative people. They're not in it to make the most money. They're in it because they love what they do, they want to change the world, they want to have a sustainable practice. There's a long list of reasons, and making money is at the bottom. So, the question is: how do you create a business where you don't have to give up what you believe in?

In my current role, I handle everything from financial management to the integrity of our community programs and our partnerships. People at any stage of their careers can apply, from those who are just getting started to people who've been going for a while who come to us to learn new skills to support and advance a sustainable business. One example is a company founded by two young women who had been educators. They saw that black and brown youth ages 17 to 24 weren't getting the professional support and opportunities their white peers were getting, so their mission is to change that balance in the media-making field. Another is a production company called Scatter that made one hugely successful major virtual reality production. They also had half the toolkit necessary for making VR and volumetric filmmaking productions that they wanted to turn into a business. Depthkit is now a multi-million-dollar venture and Scatter is an Emmy award-winning studio.

**What are the most important skills and/or qualities for someone in your profession?**

Empathetic leadership. I spend most of my day listening to people and hearing them out. The trickier part is guiding, asking questions, and making sure things are moving along in a direction they need to be. We have a tiny team to do everything, and I need everyone on my team to feel agency and empowered.

Also, business acumen. I need to be able to look at a budget and understand how it adds up.

**What do you wish you had known going into this profession?**

I wish I'd known most people don't know what they're doing and are just making it up as they're going along. Keep plugging along, keep showing up, act like you know what you're doing and follow through. Have the swagger.

**Are there many job opportunities in your profession? In what specific areas?**

My area is such a niche. I think this intersection is really vital and important, between creativity and community and a formal business that is not just about making money. This work matters, and there's a lot of opportunity. A lot of people are easing out of museum leadership and retiring, so there is also accelerated transformation in the museum world.

**How do you see your profession changing in the next 5 years? How will technology impact that change, and what skills will be required?**

For my generation, there was a big tech explosion when we were growing up with an emphasis on tech literacy. I taught myself how to code a website. My generation had to figure out how to make it work for us, but now there are apps, products tools, and software to do everything. If you want to make a GIF, there's a thing that does it for you. So now, the generation coming up has had everything handed to them, and they're actually not as good at technology. However, we still expect new hires to possess overall literacy so they can figure out any particular software program or app.

**What do you enjoy most about your job? What do you enjoy least about your job?**

I enjoy working with people. I least enjoy processing invoices and check requests.

**Can you suggest a valuable “try this” for students considering a career in your profession?**

I've learned the most when I volunteered with another group of people to create a festival, or to run a program on emerging leaders in New York arts . . . when I banded together with people my age to create something. In college, get your hands into a project with friends and make things without anyone telling you what you can and cannot do. Dream. Decide if your projects are scalable or not scalable. You'll learn so much.

## *Conversation With...*

### **KIM RHIM**

Executive Director  
The Training Source Inc., Seat Pleasant, MD  
Nonprofit entrepreneur, 28 years

#### **What was your individual career path in terms of education/training, entry-level job, or other significant opportunity?**

I was born into a two-parent family with a stay-at-home mom. My father, a postal worker, had a heart attack and died when I was 5. Life quickly changed. During kindergarten, for instance, I stayed with an aunt and uncle during the week because school was only a half day, while my mother went to work full-time as a schoolteacher. I grew up imagining I would become a teacher. My grandmother was a principal, my aunt was a teacher. That's what we did in my family; we became educators.

I did well in high school, where my sister was a teacher and my principal sang in my church's choir, so there were guardrails. As it came time to start talking about careers, I heard that teachers weren't respected, and education doesn't pay. So, I went to University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC) and chose law because I used to watch *Perry Mason*. The class sizes were huge. I hated it. A high school mentor introduced me to a Howard University recruiter, a man who later walked me down the aisle at my wedding. I transferred to Howard, in Washington, DC, changed my studies to business, and thrived. I had a full ride and graduated magna cum laude with a BBA in Business Administration & Insurance. I transitioned to Columbia University in New York City with a full ride and earned an MBA in Finance, Corporate Relations and Management.

During the summer break from Columbia, I interned at IBM in corporate training and loved it because I loved dealing with people. Due to a hiring freeze there, I started my career at C&P Telephone—now Verizon—after graduating. After a year and a half, the freeze was lifted, and I got a job at IBM's Bethesda, Maryland, office as a systems engineer. Life was great! I was newly married to my dream man, in my dream job; we had our two children and were building our new house. Seven years passed. Then the rumblings started that IBM was going to start getting rid of people. Other IT companies were coming in to compete.

One year later, IBM offered the Voluntary Transition Program. They wanted the older people who were making a lot of money to leave voluntarily to reduce the payroll. One year later came the day we were informed that IBM was laying off 100,000 people, a quarter of its

workforce. It was a grueling process where everybody had to line up to meet with a manager and find out if they were deemed surplus or critical. It didn't take a rocket scientist to see what people had heard as they exited the managers' offices.

At the time I was a project manager, and my job was safe but that made the experience no less shocking. Three of us were left of a team of 14 people to finish an \$8 million project. A lot of my friends took a hit. I started helping people write résumés and do what they needed to do to get past this because many people had been there a long time and weren't sure how to transition to a new job.

The more people I helped, the more I knew I had a gift. I wanted to help people transition in the job training arena. It was more exciting to me than any computer we sold to the government. I was a teacher.

My husband and I discussed me going out on my own to form a job training company and finally decided to go ahead. I negotiated a deal with IBM to be a consultant for a year, they gave me a computer to do the work, and I began the process of building a business.

I knew so little it wasn't even funny, but I knew I was going to figure it out. I started with a for-profit but dissolved that and incorporated as a nonprofit after I went to IBM's fire sale to buy furniture and equipment, and they told me they could donate it to me if I was a nonprofit. I took a training program on how to kick-start a business through my county's economic development program and told them I wanted to be close enough to my business to ride my bike from home. They asked me: "how many unemployed people live in my community? How many people ride buses?" I learned to do a demographic study and located the organization in the county's lowest income zip code. I found a free space for five years after driving around and deciding to go into a storefront community outreach organization to find out about the area. They welcomed me to share the space.

The Training Source, Inc. has grown from 15-week classes teaching students life skills, professional skills, and technical skills to an organization that has trained thousands of people. We have youth leadership programs, college, and career planning. We train employers to be more effective and inclusive in the workplace. People come in to get help getting clothing and food stamps. Just helping people get through COVID-19 has been huge.

I have six full-time employees, and we are funded by government and foundation grants. I'm not driven by the money; I'm driven by the impact. I love watching people change and achieve things they never thought they could.

And now my grown children—whose father was a consultant as they were growing up—have the entrepreneurial spirit. My daughter has taken her degree in cyber security, built a business, and travels the world. My son, with his finance background, has an e-commerce business.

### **What are the most important skills and/or qualities for someone in your profession?**

Compassion is number one. If you don't have that, don't do it. You have to have helping skills, good writing skills to do grant writing, integrity, customer service, and sales skills. Listening and patience are critical, and you need math skills to track data. Many think if you're an entrepreneur you answer to no one, but the truth is we answer to everyone, whether it's the parents of the youth we serve or the foundations that award our grants.

**What do you wish you had known going into this profession?**

I wish I had known how different workforce development is from other nonprofits. It's its own separate entity from a funding standpoint, and I've learned our best approach is to seek corporate and foundation dollars.

**Are there many job opportunities in your profession? In what specific areas?**

I think there are. Starting with administrative and clerical work, we need people answering the phones, preparing class materials, and tracking time and attendance. In the professional realm, there are trainers, grant writers, case managers, career counselors, and job developers. In management, we need program managers, data managers, IT managers, and community relations managers. Plus, executive managers.

**How do you see your profession changing in the next 5 years? How will technology impact that change, and what skills will be required?**

COVID-19 already has made us pivot to more remote training. I foresee a hybrid model where we are preparing people for in-person and remote careers. I think a lot of industries will move in that direction.

**What do you enjoy most about your job? What do you enjoy least about your job?**

I enjoy most watching change happen positively in people's lives. Having a student who thinks he can never learn technology learn technology; letting a first-generation, college-bound student who thinks she can't go to college know there's more money out there for people who can't afford college than people who can. I could do that all day, every day.

I least like having to raise the money to do the work. I spend long hours writing proposals, and we have the administrative burden of reporting and requesting reimbursement for contracts. I also don't like working with anyone who has preconceived notions and stereotypes about the populations we serve.

**Can you suggest a valuable “try this” for students considering a career in your profession?**

Volunteer. Try to get your community service hours in an environment where you'd like to work. Try to get an internship, whether you are paid or not. Try a college practicum. A lot of nonprofit management classes require you to do work in the community in exchange for class credit. Also do informational interviews and tours.