Chapter 2
Social Work as a Profession

Social Work: A Profession of Leaders
There are numerous definitions of social work explaining its fundamental mission. One of these definitions is the one adopted by the National Association of Social Work Board of Directors: “Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and to create societal conditions favorable to their goals” (As cited in Colby & Dziegielewski, 2001, p. 91). This definition clearly identifies the long standing commitment of the profession to intervene both at the individual and environmental levels.

Fields of Practice
BSW graduates are prepared to work effectively with individuals, families, small groups, communities, and organizations in a variety of settings. Graduates are employed in both public and private agencies. They provide both direct and indirect services to individuals, families and groups, and are often involved in organizational planning and management. Some of the settings in which they may be employed include:

- advocacy programs
- aging services
- businesses and industry
- child and adult day care centers
- children and youth services
- churches
- community action agencies
- community crisis centers
- correctional facilities
- criminal justice agencies
- disability service agencies
- domestic violence programs
- employee assistance programs
- head start programs
- home care agencies
- homeless shelters
- hospices
- hospitals/clinics
- income maintenance programs
- legal services agencies
- mental health services
- public health agencies
- residential treatment programs
- schools
- substance abuse programs
- training/vocational centers
- vocational rehabilitation agencies
- voluntary associations


**Code of Ethics in Social Work**

A code of ethics can help establish standards for behavior and expectations in performance. The Bachelor of Social Work Program has adopted the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics as its standard of expected behavior and performance. Students admitted to the BSW Program are expected to adhere to the standards described in the Code. The Code can be found at [www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code](http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code).

Social Work practitioners have chosen to develop and adopt ethical codes in addition to the NASW Code of Ethics. Links to other Codes of Ethics are listed below. These are provided for information and exploration. It is important to remember that students in the BSW Program will be held accountable to the standards found in the NASW Code of Ethics.


International Federation of Social Workers’ (IFSW) Code of Ethics can be found at [www.ifsw.org/f3899932.html](http://www.ifsw.org/f3899932.html).

American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work’s Code of Ethics can be found at [www.abecsw.org/about-code-ethics.html](http://www.abecsw.org/about-code-ethics.html).

**Licensure**

Following a minimum of two years post-graduate supervised social work practice experience, BSW graduates of Indiana University are eligible to apply for legal licensure by the State of Indiana. Upon receipt of a complete application and a passing score on a standardized examination, the Indiana State Professional Licensing Agency designates the BSW graduate a Licensed Social Worker (LSW). You can visit the Bureau at [www.in.gov/pla/](http://www.in.gov/pla/).