

2024 SNAPSHOT OF NEW MEXICO'S SOCIAL WORKERS:

Factors Influencing
Professional Wellbeing and an
Interactive Map of Licensed
Social Workers by County and
Licensure Type

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HIGHLANDS
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IN SOCIAL WORK

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In May 2024, to learn more about New Mexico's social workers and the workforce challenges they face, New Mexico Highlands University's Center for Excellence in Social Work (Center) conducted its first biennial *Social Workers of New Mexico Survey*. A total of 755 social workers responded to the survey, which collected information on demographics, continuing education needs, and factors influencing professional wellbeing.

This brief focuses on initial survey findings. It also provides an interactive statewide map to inform community members, organizational and agency leaders, and legislators about where social workers live, what types of licensure they hold, and the behavioral health deserts in our state. The full report of findings will be released in August 2024.

Social Workers of New Mexico Survey

Among the social workers who responded to the survey, 16% work statewide, 31% work in a large city, 22% serve in a small city or town, 18% are practicing in rural communities and 2% serve frontier communities. Eighty-two percent, or 620 of the 755 survey respondents, answered questions addressing factors that influence their professional wellbeing. Here are some key takeaways:

- A majority (88%) of respondents feel proud to be social workers.
- A strong majority (91%) get satisfaction from the work they do.

Despite this:

- Many (32%) cannot complete their work in a typical workday and 39% feel overwhelmed by their caseloads or workloads.
- 41% feel they are not equitably compensated for their skills and expertise.
- 43% report that student loans negatively impact their financial wellbeing.
- 37% have more than one job to meet their financial needs.
- 72% feel discouraged by systems barriers they face in their work.
- 61% disagree that their communities have the necessary resources to meet the client or social needs addressed by their organizations.
- 25% worry that their program or another program in their organization will be eliminated.
- 33% are negatively affected by the traumatic experiences of the people they serve, with 51% reporting they have experienced burnout or vicarious trauma, and 23% stating they have health problems because of their work.

- 15% plan to relocate to another state in the next 1-5 years and 7.6% in the next 6-10 years (23% within 10 years).
- 19% plan to retire in the next 1-5 years and another 15% in the next 6-10 years (34% within 10 years).
- 39% have considered leaving the profession of social work.
- 14% have plans to leave the profession.

These initial findings portray some complexities influencing social worker professional wellbeing and factors that may contribute to our state's social work workforce shortage.

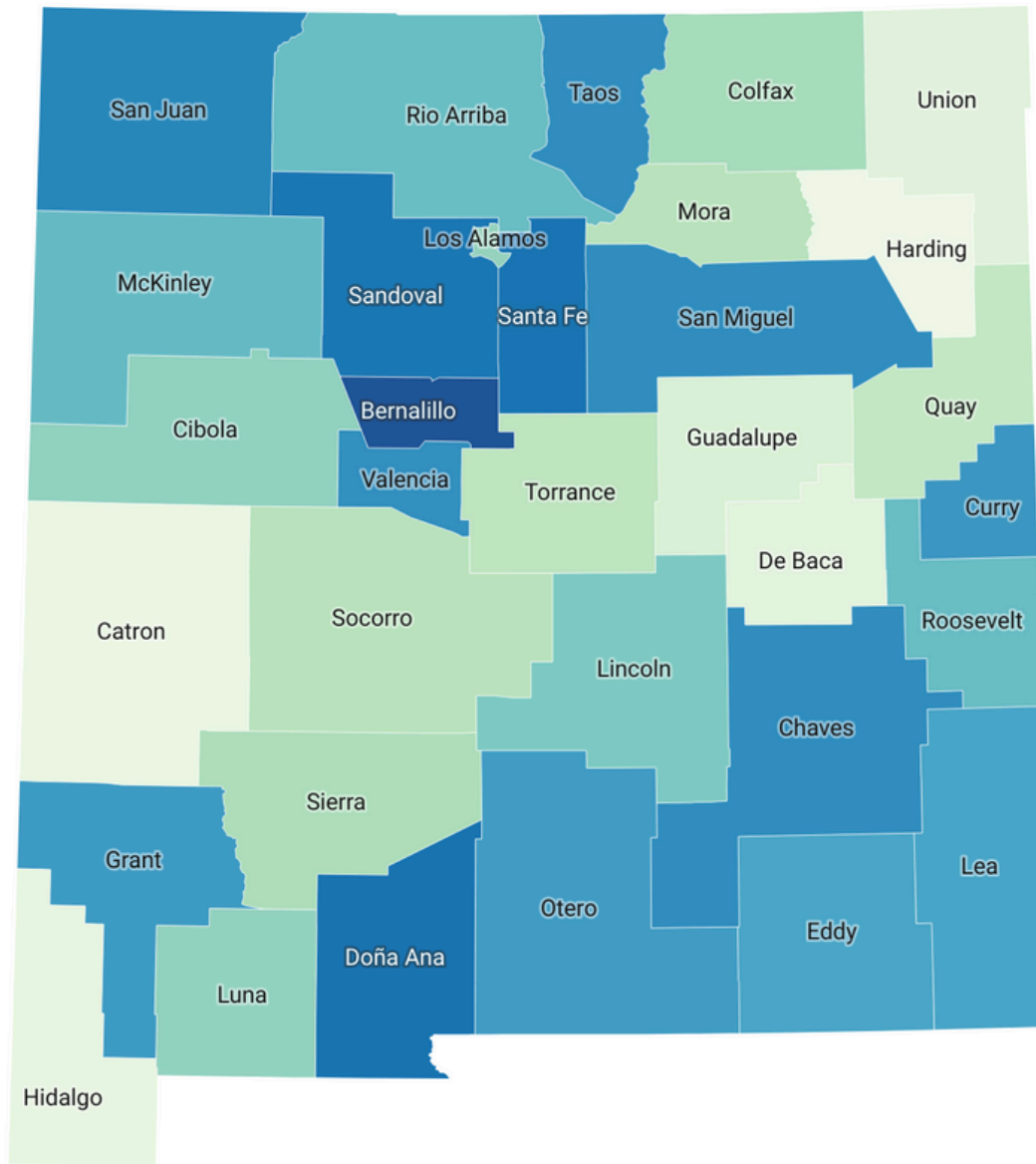
Map of Licensed Social Workers

Of the 5,404 social workers licensed to practice in New Mexico, only 4,347 list their permanent addresses in the state. The following interactive map depicts the counties in which social workers live and what level of licensure they hold. Of note is that only 69 social workers currently hold provisional licenses, indicating very few social workers in the workforce pipeline. This map may be useful in identifying counties that are underserved. It may also prove helpful in understanding what types of services can be provided for each license. The New Mexico Administrative Code (2022) provides guidance on what services can be offered for each level of licensure:

- Licensed Baccalaureate Social Workers (LBSW) are valuable generalist workers qualified to gather information, develop biopsychosocial assessments, create service plans, offer case management, information and referral, counseling under supervision, advocacy, and implementation of policies and programs at an emerging level.
- Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSW) have specialized knowledge and practice skills at all levels of social work practice, including assessment, intervention and evaluation at the clinical, community, research and policy practice levels. They may provide clinical services such as diagnosing and treatment under clinical social work supervision.
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) and Licensed Independent Social Workers (LISW) have the most advanced level of licensure. Social workers who are LCSWs/LISWs have completed a minimum of 3600 hours of work as an LMSW (2 years of post-graduate direct or clinical social work practice) with 90 hours of supervision. They possess advanced skills and expertise to practice independently with people, couples, families, groups, communities, organizations, and in policy and research practice. They can also supervise LBSWs, LMSWs, and other LCSW/LISWs.

Licensed Social Workers in New Mexico by County

Total Licensed SW - Per County



Map: NMHU-FVSSW: The Center for Excellence in Social Work • Created with Datawrapper

Click Link Below to Access the Interactive Map

<https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/nfHZd/6/>

Licensed Social Workers in New Mexico

Licensed social workers are located statewide, with greatest concentration in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe Counties (New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department Boards and Commissions Division, 2024)

LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS IN NEW MEXICO

New Mexico County	Provisional	LBSW	LMSW	LCSW	LISW	Total Licensed SW by County
Bernalillo County	14	60	647	991	35	1,747
Catron County	0	0	0	1	0	1
Chaves County	3	22	36	39	2	102
Cibola County	0	3	13	6	0	22
Colfax County	0	1	6	10	0	17
Curry County	3	13	30	36	2	84
De Baca County	0	0	1	2	0	3
Doña Ana County	6	69	207	254	5	541
Eddy County	1	11	30	19	0	61
Grant County	5	18	20	36	0	79
Guadalupe County	0	0	4	2	0	6
Harding County	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hidalgo County	0	0	0	2	0	2
Lea County	1	19	19	24	0	63
Lincoln County	0	6	9	13	0	28
Los Alamos County	0	1	5	13	1	20
Luna County	2	7	8	4	0	21
McKinley County	1	5	13	21	0	40
Mora County	0	1	6	6	1	14
Otero County	1	10	31	32	1	75
Quay County	0	3	3	6	0	12
Rio Arriba County	0	1	11	25	0	37
Roosevelt County	1	10	13	15	0	39
San Juan County	5	22	60	82	0	169
San Miguel County	3	19	52	29	4	107
Sandoval County	3	20	116	187	11	337
Santa Fe County	6	9	146	287	18	466
Sierra County	0	3	9	4	0	16
Socorro County	0	4	3	7	0	14
Taos County	2	6	33	63	5	109
Torrance County	0	1	4	7	1	13
Union County	0	0	2	2	0	4
Valencia County	0	6	47	44	1	98
Total Licensed SW in NM by Licensure Type	57	350	1,584	2,269	87	4,347

Source: New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department Boards and Commissions Division – List of Licensed New Mexico Social Workers as of 05/07/2024

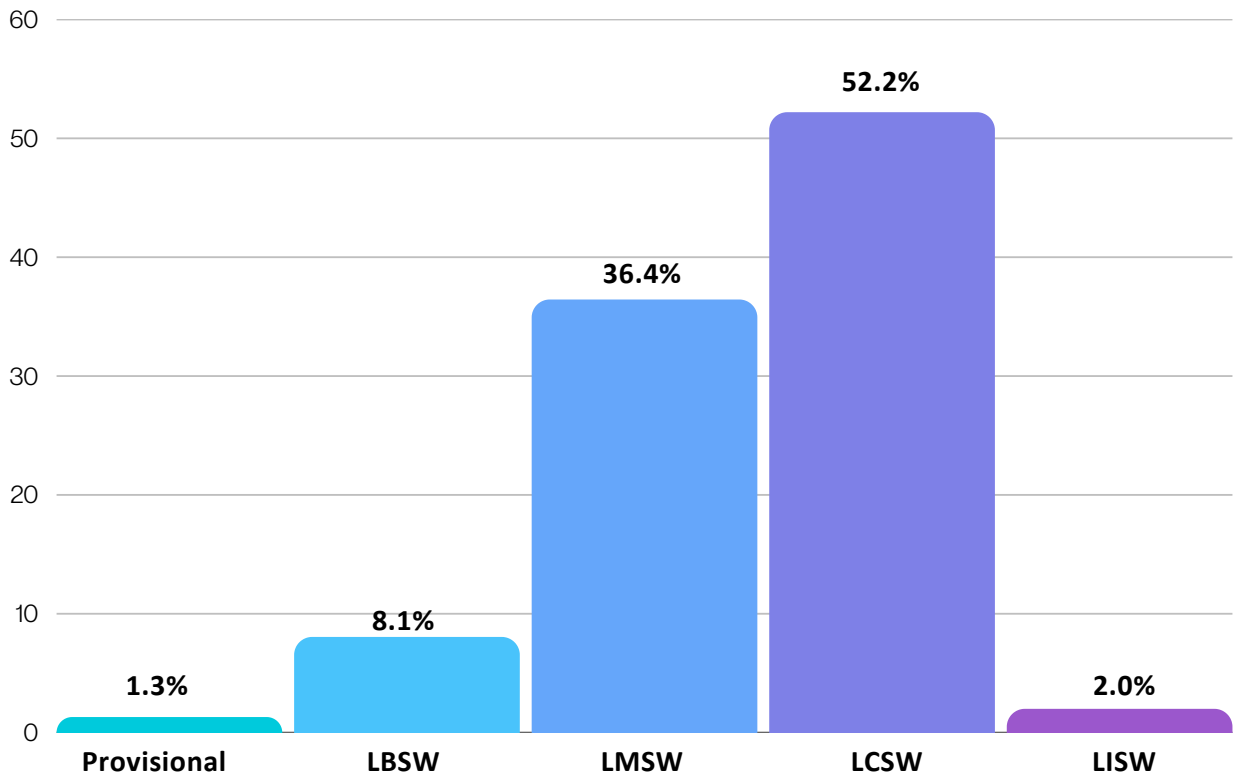
LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS IN NEW MEXICO

New Mexico County	Provisional	LBSW	LMSW	LCSW	LISW	Total Licensed SW by County	County Population as of 6/1/23
Bernalillo County	14	60	647	991	35	1,747	671,586
Catron County	0	0	0	1	0	1	3,825
Chaves County	3	22	36	39	2	102	63,561
Cibola County	0	3	13	6	0	22	26,780
Colfax County	0	1	6	10	0	17	12,255
Curry County	3	13	30	36	2	84	47,222
De Baca County	0	0	1	2	0	3	1,657
Doña Ana County	6	69	207	254	5	541	225,210
Eddy County	1	11	30	19	0	61	60,275
Grant County	5	18	20	36	0	79	27,472
Guadalupe County	0	0	4	2	0	6	4,292
Harding County	0	0	0	0	0	0	624
Hidalgo County	0	0	0	2	0	2	3,965
Lea County	1	19	19	24	0	63	72,101
Lincoln County	0	6	9	13	0	28	20,029
Los Alamos County	0	1	5	13	1	20	19,444
Luna County	2	7	8	4	0	21	25,316
McKinley County	1	5	13	21	0	40	68,797
Mora County	0	1	6	6	1	14	4,123
Otero County	1	10	31	32	1	75	68,835
Quay County	0	3	3	6	0	12	8,510
Rio Arriba County	0	1	11	25	0	37	39,876
Roosevelt County	1	10	13	15	0	39	18,787
San Juan County	5	22	60	82	0	169	120,675
San Miguel County	3	19	52	29	4	107	26,668
Sandoval County	3	20	116	187	11	337	155,936
Santa Fe County	6	9	146	287	18	466	155,956
Sierra County	0	3	9	4	0	16	11,488
Socorro County	0	4	3	7	0	14	15,963
Taos County	2	6	33	63	5	109	34,405
Torrance County	0	1	4	7	1	13	15,633
Union County	0	0	2	2	0	4	3,964
Valencia County	0	6	47	44	1	98	79,141
Total Licensed SW in NM by Licensure Type	57	350	1,584	2,269	87	4,347	2,114,371

Source: New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department Boards and Commissions Division– List of Licensed New Mexico Social Workers as of 05/07/2024

LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS IN NEW MEXICO

Percent of Licensed Social Workers in New Mexico by Licensure Type



Source: New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department Boards and Commissions Division— List of Licensed New Mexico Social Workers as of 05/07/2024