

# 4 STEPS TO BECOME AN Oncology Social Worker

one



## Obtain a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from an accredited university.

- You do not have to have a social work background to obtain your MSW, but you do need to have a bachelor's degree in any field. You can search for accredited MSW programs through the [Council on Social Work Education's directory](#).
- While in school, take courses in medical social work, grief and loss, and health and aging. Also, pursue internship placements in medical settings to build your experience.

two



## Pursue social work licensure in your state.

- Once you have graduated with your MSW, you are eligible to obtain a social work license in your state. Each state has various licensure levels and different processes to obtain them. You can find your state licensure criteria on the [Associate of Social Work Board's website](#). Part of the licensure process includes taking the [ASWB Exam](#).

three



## Search for a job.

- Once you have your MSW and your license, you can search for a job. Typically, cancer centers prefer a social worker with experience in oncology or in the medical field. You can search the [National Association of Social Work's website for job postings](#), search websites such as [Indeed.com](#), or look at local hospital system websites for job postings.
- While you may not yet be qualified for an oncology social work position, you can search for entry level medical social work positions in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and nursing homes to build your experience in the medical field.

four



## Obtain Oncology Social Work Certification.

- Once you have worked in a cancer center and gained a certain amount of experience and skills, you can apply for an [Oncology Social Work Certification \(OSW-C\) through the Board of Oncology Social Workers](#). The OSW-C requires a social worker to demonstrate a comprehensive and specialized skillset in oncology social work.