



TENTH EDITION

# Human Services

in Contemporary America

WILLIAM R. BURGER



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in Contemporary America

WILLIAM R. BURGER

*Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York*



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***Human Services in Contemporary  
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**William R. Burger**

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## Dedication

*To all of you already in the human services field and to those who choose to enter this field, we all thank you. We need you now more than ever.*

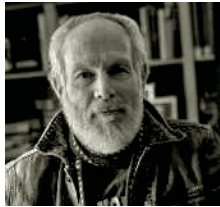
W. R. B.



# About the Author

**WILLIAM R. BURGER** received his doctorate in social psychology, but his academic background also encompasses the fields of educational psychology and philosophy of education. While attending graduate school at Harvard University, he was awarded a research assistantship for his work in the area of community decision making.

Bill has served as Director of the Mental Health and Human Services Program and Chairperson of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Human Services at



Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York. Currently, he is a Full Professor within the University. He has served as a consultant to a variety of human services programs in New York and Massachusetts, has lectured at various colleges and universities, and has written a number of guest editorials for various newspapers.

Bill resides in Massachusetts with his wife, a cat, and a dog.



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# Preface

This text was written in the hope of enhancing the student's ability to help others with problems in their lives. The ability to help others in a professional context requires a base of knowledge along with a range of helping skills that can, to a large extent, be taught and learned. This text is intended to help the beginning student take the first steps toward acquiring the needed knowledge and skills.

The content provides a general introduction to the field of human services and is designed for introductory college courses in human services, mental-health technology, social work, community mental health, and other human services programs. It is expected that most students who read this text are headed toward careers that involve direct contact with people. However, the book would also be useful to those considering administrative work in the human services.

Students in the human services typically begin their training with hopes of helping other people lead more fulfilling lives. Unfortunately, these hopes are sometimes dampened by the realities of the outside world. Although humanistic values do play an important role in present-day America, they must compete with other motives such as profit, power, and self-aggrandizement. In order to be effective, the human services worker must be able to face the harsh realities of our complex, imperfect society even while keeping the ideal society in mind and working toward it in a realistic way.

In the pages that follow, I have sought a balance between idealism and realism. I certainly do not intend to discourage idealism in students. However, experience has shown me that discouragement often attacks those who expect too much of clients, helping agencies, and themselves. This disillusionment can be avoided if the student knows what to expect.

This text offers a great deal of valuable information about human services, a field that has greatly increased in scope and complexity over recent decades. The material is presented in a provocative manner, raising issues not usually addressed in introductory texts. The impact of political, economic, and social pressures on human services is explored.

First the goals, functions, and organization of human services are examined in the context of contemporary social problems. Next, the groups of people who receive help from human services are described. A historical survey of human services follows, providing a background against which current efforts can be viewed. The major theories that govern helping efforts are covered, along with techniques and methods. The student is also provided with practical information about career options in the human services field.

The final chapters are certainly unusual for an introductory text. I feel it is important for students to know something about how social policies are developed and about how human services workers might influence policies. These social policies, which determine who receives what kind of help, have a great impact on worker and client alike. It is undeniable that today's student is the policymaker of tomorrow.

In the chapter on prevention, I demonstrate a strong bias in favor of programs aimed at preventing problems and dysfunctions from developing in the first place. Frankly, I try to persuade students, instructors, and human services agencies that prevention programs should play a major role in the future of human services.

The text concludes with a sampling of current controversies affecting human services. This section is offered with the intent of fostering a realistic understanding of conflicts and issues that confront a services workers. In addition, I also discuss the issues of the various titles by which human services workers are identified.

The introductory course in human services is perhaps the most important a student will take. It is here that the student's attitudes and philosophy are developed. I believe that a humanistic perspective, combined with a realistic awareness of societal problems, provides the best foundation for creative and effective helping.

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## New to the Tenth Edition

In each new edition of this text, I seek to examine and reflect the ongoing changes in our contemporary culture and its influence upon our ever-evolving system of human services. While focusing on the nature and scope of human services here in the United States it becomes essential to stress the interconnectedness of events, which occur throughout the world as they influence change in this culture. The cost of gasoline for our cars or oil to heat our homes, the cost and availability of certain food and clothing, and the competition and availability of jobs are few examples of areas, which can be significantly impacted by events occurring in different parts of the world. Historically, these changes more significantly affect groups that are already disproportionate in need. Consequently, the human services system must continue to adapt and change as necessary in order to be responsive to a dynamic cultural landscape.

During the passage of time since the previous edition of this text, our culture has experienced an acceleration of violence in the form of acts of terrorism, mass shootings and widespread gun violence. The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election has

been one of the most unusual polarizing and divisive events in recent history. Each candidate had espoused a radically different political agenda and vision for the future of the country. Throughout the world, large numbers of displaced people seek refuge and asylum in other countries having escaped from their war-ravaged homelands.

As I continue to believe, to be effective on every level of our human services system, it is valuable for workers to understand the social, economic, and political landscape in which human services will operate. In order to keep pace with the number of events and changes occurring over the past several years, this tenth edition has a number of new sections and topics as well as currently expanded and updated material throughout the text. The new sections include a review of human services during the 2008–2016 Obama Administration, the emerging concept of behavioral health, multicultural counseling and working with diverse populations, emerging human services target populations, current NOHS Ethical Guidelines, a view of the new administration of President Donald Trump, and current controversies. In addition, there is completely revised and updated material on drugs, drug abuse and the opioid epidemic, additional new examples of Real Life Human Services work, updated material on AIDS, and a more current look at the American family.

On a personal note, I continue to thank all of you who value this text. I am pleased to see more material written in this field and an increase in worthwhile texts as well. There is still and always a lot more work to do. I believe this tenth edition will provide the reader with a continued realistic and comprehensive framework to view our contemporary human services system.

W.R.B.

## Acknowledgments

In this tenth edition, I was very fortunate to work with a group of individuals who significantly added to the quality and scope of this text. I wish to acknowledge the scholarly contributions of Dr. Joseph Verdino, Dr. Michael Barnhart, Dr. Lourdes Follins, Dr. Monica Joseph, Dr. Joan Standora and Professor Arlene Lehman, all of whom are faculty within the Behavioral Sciences and Human Services Department of Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York.

I must thank Mary Gifford for the number of never-ending hours and days she spent entering my words into the computer and offering numerous suggestions. I must acknowledge my friend and former colleague, Dr. Edward Martin for once again offering his considerable technological expertise to this project. I am thankful to Ms. Beryl Skog, Ms. Kim Gifford, Ms. Jenise Lucey, and Ms. Hayley Sumner for their contributions to the Real Life Human Services Work section. I thank Mr. Neil Brander and Ms. Julie McCarthy for their photographic contributions. I thank Kate Gibbs at the front desk of the Berkshire South Community Center for always asking me if I am going home next to work on my text. I would like to thank Julie Martinez and the Cengage team with special thanks to Alexander Hancock for his responsiveness, skill, and consistent effort. Finally, I would like to thank all the individuals involved with the National Organization of Human Services. You do great work.

*William R. Burger*



# 1

## Human Services in the United States Today

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- LO1** Understand the nature and scope of human services in the United States today
- LO2** Identify the role of primary social supports in meeting human needs
- LO3** Examine the role of human services workers and the kinds of help provided
- LO4** Explore the diversity of Real Life Human Services Work
- LO5** Understand the nature of political controversy (liberal vs. conservative) and the impact on human services
- LO6** Review human services under the 2008–2016 Obama administration
- LO7** Explore the 2016 election: President Donald Trump and the road ahead
- LO8** Understand the impact of contemporary problems on human needs including:
  - Natural/human caused disasters
  - Terrorism
  - Poverty
  - Prejudice and discrimination
  - Social change



- Economic and political factors
- Psychological stress and developmental crises

**LO9** Learn about food justice and health

**LO10** Examine the nature of health care in the United States

## Introduction

Over the years, **human services** in the United States have evolved into a network of programs and agencies that provide an array of services to millions of Americans. The one feature shared by all of these services is that they are designed to meet human needs. Thus, this chapter begins with a consideration of the full range of human needs and the kinds of services that seek to meet them.

Some service agencies are devoted mainly to helping people meet basic survival needs such as food and shelter, whereas some are concerned with helping clients achieve more satisfying relationships or attain other kinds of personal fulfillment. Primary social supports, such as family and friends, also play a role in meeting human needs, and that role will be examined in this first chapter.

There is controversy about just what needs should be met by agencies supported by public or private funds. There is, in fact, a great deal of controversy about questions involving the scope and quality of human services. This chapter provides an overview of human services that addresses some of these questions.

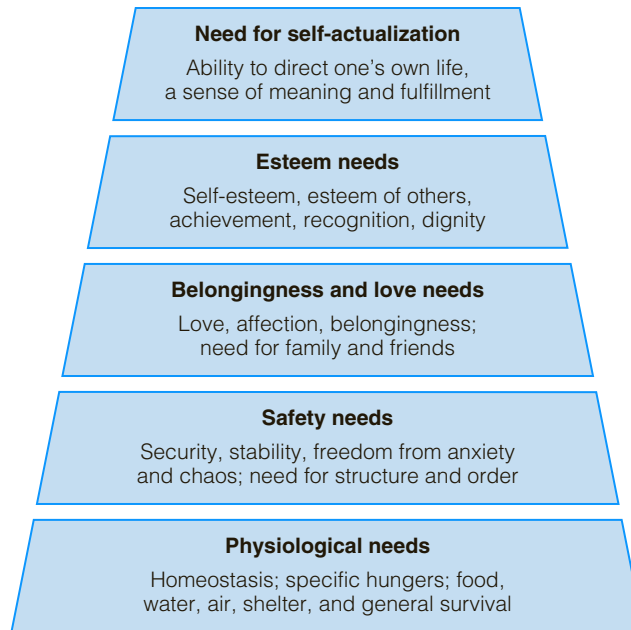
Critics argue that human services are wasteful and inefficient, whereas supporters are convinced that more should be done to meet people's needs. Some social planners want to cut funds for services, but others demand increased funding. Because these conflicts are fought out primarily in the political arena, it is vital to grasp the liberal and conservative positions that underlie the countless debates about specific programs. Both positions are outlined here.

This chapter also includes a survey of some contemporary problems that may affect the ability of Americans to meet their own needs. For example, a person involved in a natural disaster such as a hurricane or earthquake is very likely to need help from human services on an emergency basis. Social problems such as discrimination, poverty, and unemployment may also reduce a person's ability to be self-supporting. Victims of these problems may need help only temporarily or for an extended period.

So this chapter introduces some of the topics basic to a study of contemporary human services. At first glance, they may appear to be simple topics, but closer examination shows them to be very complex—so much so that the brief preliminary information given in this introductory chapter is elaborated on throughout the book.

## Human Needs: Focus of Human Services

**LO1** A number of theories have been proposed for conceptualizing human needs. Although at first glance his theories appear dated, Maslow's work (1968) is still referred to and considered by many current authors in the field (Ivey, Ivey,



**FIGURE 1.1** ■ Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

& Zalaquett, 2016; Neukrug, 2017; Schiff, 2015; Woodside & McClam, 2015), to be a benchmark for understanding the concept of human needs. He conceived of needs as existing in a kind of pyramid, or hierarchy, as shown in Figure 1.1.

At the base of the pyramid are the basic physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, and the need for oxygen. These are matters of life and death. It is only when such survival needs are satisfied that the individual focuses on safety needs, which are met by a stable, predictable, and secure environment. Clearly, this type of environment requires decent housing in a safe neighborhood.

Once safety needs have been mostly satisfied, the need for belonging, or belongingness, and love begins to emerge, expressed by a desire for affectionate relations with others—one's family, lover, or some larger group. After the first three levels of needs—physiological, safety, and love/belonging—have been largely satisfied, esteem needs come to the fore, such as the need to be respected as a competent or even a superior person. Most of us desire the recognition and appreciation of others.

The highest need, that for **self-actualization**, has to do with fulfilling one's innate tendencies and potentials. This need involves expressing one's inner nature and talents. For one person, the path to self-actualization might be artistic creativity; for another, it might be studying Eastern religions. This highest level of motivation generally becomes prominent in later life. Young adults are generally preoccupied with making a living and winning the love and approval of others. Maslow (1970) estimated that the average American adult has satisfied about 85% of physiological needs and that the percentage of needs satisfied declines at each step up the hierarchy. At the top step, only 10% have attained satisfaction of self-actualization needs.

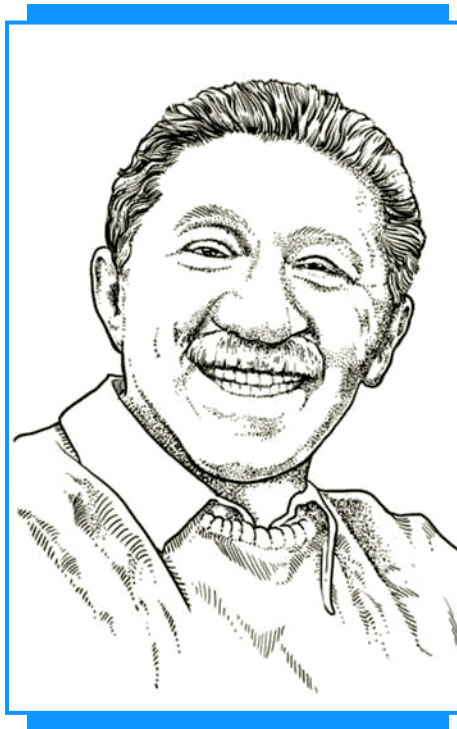
Maslow (2011) believed that needs arrange themselves in a hierarchy in terms of potency—that is, physiological needs are stronger than safety needs, which in turn are stronger than love needs, and so on. The higher the need, the less imperative its fulfillment is for sheer survival and the longer gratification can be postponed.

Deprivation of higher needs does not produce the kind of desperate emergency reaction triggered by deprivation of lower needs. For example, needs for belonging are a luxury when food or safety is denied.

Maslow (1987) also pointed out that for higher needs to be satisfied, environmental conditions must be favorable. By this he meant that a person must have a supportive family, a decent income, opportunities for a good education, and so on. People without these kinds of advantages face an uphill struggle to attain the higher levels of need satisfaction. In general, Maslow stated, counseling and psychotherapy are more appropriate and effective in helping people achieve higher needs than lower needs. At the lowest need levels, psychotherapy is not much use at all. People who are struggling for basic survival are too worried and preoccupied to give much thought to higher needs. Social planners agree that society must offer tangible kinds of help like food and shelter and medical care to the truly disadvantaged.

Some human services devote themselves to safety needs. The criminal justice system, which includes law enforcement and corrections, is designed to meet safety needs. Citizens want to live in secure communities and go about their daily activities without fear of being threatened, robbed, or assaulted. To this end, the public spends millions for police, courts, and corrections. Chapter 2 discusses some reasons for the partial failure of the criminal justice system to create a safe environment.

One of the most consistent findings of social research is that the risk of physical or mental illness is greatest when the individual cannot find a place in the social order. Persons who have been deprived of meaningful social contact for any of a number of reasons are at relatively greater risk of developing tuberculosis, alcoholism, accident proneness, severe mental illness, and suicidal tendencies



*Abraham Maslow*



(Cassel, 1990). Accordingly, some human services are designed to help people feel that they belong and are valued members of a group. It is expected that such membership may help keep a person out of an institution and, therefore, serve an important preventive purpose. For example, some agencies set up senior clubs for elderly people who would otherwise be living a lonely, isolated life. Another example is the establishment of psychiatric residences for former mental patients who have no family.

Some human services agencies are primarily concerned with meeting the higher needs for esteem and self-actualization. Others help meet these higher needs indirectly by fulfilling basic needs, thus allowing individuals to pursue higher needs on their own initiative. Education, particularly at the higher levels, is attuned to helping students attain fulfillment and satisfaction through pursuit of a career.

In general, human services workers encourage people to function at their highest possible level. More tangible kinds of help are provided in the form of scholarships and grants offered by a number of governmental and private agencies.

## ■ Criticisms of Maslow's Theory

The idea that our lower needs must be satisfied before moving to the next higher ones is contradicted by several kinds of evidence. In some societies, for example, people periodically go hungry but, at the same time, exhibit strong social ties and a strong sense of self. In fact, a certain degree of hardship in meeting basic needs can bring people together and give them a sense of purpose in working together to overcome adversity (Neher, 1991; Schiff, 2015). Similarly, many couples in our own society report that a strong bond was formed during a period of early struggles that was weakened by later affluence. Contrary to Maslow's theory, these examples suggest that deprivation of basic physiological needs may sometimes facilitate satisfaction of higher needs, such as the need for intimacy. Aside from anecdotal evidence, there are a number of research studies that have attempted to test Maslow's concepts. The results been mixed: some support and others refute various hypotheses.

In general, the research conducted in work settings has not supported Maslow's theory. For example, Wahba and Bridwell (1976) asked workers to list their needs in order of importance and found that the rankings did not fit Maslow's hierarchy. Other investigators have suggested that more than one need may be operating at a time (Mullainathan, 2015). In other words, a person may be striving to fulfill simultaneously both basic and growth needs. Still other studies have suggested that moderate levels of deprivation stimulate creative potential, ward off boredom, and enhance a sense of competence. This idea runs counter to Maslow's notion that higher needs emerge only after fairly complete satisfaction of lower needs. It may be that some need deprivation is experienced as a challenge and, ultimately, is growth enhancing.

## Role of Primary Social Supports in Meeting Needs

**LO2** Most people seek gratification of needs through a network of social relationships. For example, family, friends, and peer groups can meet needs for nurturance and intimacy. Religious and social groups help meet needs for belonging, esteem, and

spiritual enrichment. A job satisfies crucial economic needs and also provides a setting for social interaction with coworkers. Additional support may come from informal social contacts, like bartenders and hairdressers, well known for listening sympathetically to the problems of their customers. This network of relationships, which makes up the primary social support system, is the traditional source of need satisfaction in our culture. One important feature of this support system is that usually some sense of mutual obligation underlies the transactions. In other words, a person is expected to give something, to meet certain needs of others, in exchange for what is received. Sometimes it is enough to simply let others know that one is ready to help if the need arises.

Too many people in this country are still sadly lacking in primary social supports. They may have no friends, no family, no job, and therefore no way to meet important needs. In some cases, a person may have family and friends who would be willing to help but who lack the means to do so. The national community-based, nonprofit organization, Mental Health America, released its 2016 annual assessment of Americans with mental illness report. This report focuses upon the treatment individuals receive throughout the United States. Their findings conclude that 23% of adults (43.7 million people) have a mental health condition and more than half of them do not receive treatment (Nutt, 2016). As detailed in Chapter 3, certain human services came into being to meet the needs of people who have nowhere to turn for help. Over the years, human services have expanded greatly and now go far beyond helping the poor, sick, and disabled. Gradually, they have taken over some of the functions of primary social supports. For example, the task of caring for poor elderly persons, once assumed by the family, is increasingly being accepted by government human services agencies.

## ■ Self-Help Groups

**Self-help groups** are basically mutual-help groups made up of people who have similar problems. They occupy a position somewhere between traditional social supports and formal agencies that provide services. The increasing popularity of these groups may be due partly to the decline of the extended family and other traditional sources of support in our society (Gladding, 2012). Whatever the cause, these groups have experienced tremendous growth over the past 40–50 years.

Riesman (2000) points out that “more Americans try to change their health behaviors through self-help groups than through all other forms of professional programs combined” (p. 47). What distinguishes these groups from formal service organizations is that they operate without professional leadership. Many professional therapists view self-help groups as useful adjuncts to treatment and urge clients to participate in them (Ambrosino, Ambrosino, Heffernan, & Shuttlesworth, 2016; Comer, 1996; Gladding, 2012).

A wide variety of problems or disorders may be the focus of a self-help group. Alcoholism, drug abuse, compulsive gambling, bereavement, overeating, phobias, rape victimization, unemployment, and physical illnesses (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, and cancer) are some examples of issues that may be addressed in support groups. Two advantages of self-help groups are that they are less expensive and, because they offer support from other people who share the same problem, less intimidating than a professionally led group. A number of self-help groups are mentioned or described in various sections of this book.

## ■ Effects of Social Programs on Primary Supports

During the 1960s, there was a vigorous expansion of social programs designed to eliminate poverty, remove slums, and improve the health and education of poor people. By the end of the decade, some social planners had come to realize that (1) the programs were not always having the desired effect and (2) new problems were being created. For example, it appeared that welfare programs were having the unintended effect of breaking up families and sometimes leading to family non-formation. The programs were administered in such a way that a mother with limited income received not only cash but also a package of other benefits including medical insurance, food stamps, and rent subsidies. If a father was present, he was usually a low-paid worker at risk of being laid off. He could jeopardize the entire benefits package if he attempted to support the family alone. If he left, little effort was made by the welfare program to require him to support the family in any way. In fact, the family was more economically secure without him.

Clearly, the system provided little incentive for the family unit to stay together. The lesson to be drawn from this part of our national experience is that programs designed to help, however well intended, may have perverse or unexpected consequences. When these programs weaken the family and the neighborhood, there is good reason to be concerned. The strength of the primary supports of family and neighborhood is essential if individuals are to cope with a complex society. They are the basic linkages of one person to another. Butler and Kondratas (1987) maintain that America has a strong public interest in government programs that strengthen families. When the family is fragmented, what often follows is poor education, poor skills, and poor performance. This in turn causes the perpetuation of poverty, and the vicious cycle continues.

## Overview of Human Services

“What are human services, anyway?” is one of the questions students most frequently ask. It would be helpful to provide an “official” or generally accepted definition, but there is no such thing. Actually, ideas about human services have changed over the course of time. As discussed in Chapter 3, early approaches to human services were centered on the hazards of illness, disability, and economic dependence. Programs were designed to help people who were unable to take care of their own needs. It was recognized that people with little or no income in increasingly complex industrial societies were at risk of starvation or serious distress. This view, which equates human services with providing services only to the economically dependent, now seems rather narrow.

Another approach is to define human services in terms of the activities of modern society that enhance the well-being of its citizens. Martin (2011), for example, suggests that “human service agencies come into the picture when people find themselves confronting barriers to getting their needs met and their own resources for overcoming these obstacles are insufficient.” (p. 5). This is a broad definition that might include a wide spectrum of services, ranging from job creation to maintaining a clean, safe, and pleasant environment, all aimed at helping people achieve the highest possible level of self-sufficiency. Another more succinct definition of human

services is offered by Alle-Corliss and Alle-Corliss (1998) viewing human services as “encompassing professional services provided to those in need.” Still another perspective is offered by Kanel (2008) who observes “human services uses a multidisciplinary, holistic, and eclectic approach to helping people with various needs.”

Experts do not agree on the range or type of helping activities that should be included in human services. A definition that falls between the very narrow and the very broad ones just discussed is preferable. Human services are organized activities that help people in the areas of health care; mental health, including care for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the physically handicapped; social welfare; child care; criminal justice; housing; recreation; and education. Another type of service that might be included is income maintenance, a term that refers to programs like unemployment insurance and social security, which provide income to people who are unemployed or retired.

It should be noted that human services do not include the help given by family, friends, or other primary supports. To be considered human services, the help must be provided by some type of formal organization, be it a clinic, hospital, nursing home, agency, bureau, or other service institution.

Obviously, human services cover a lot of ground, having increased greatly in size and scope during recent decades in the United States. Currently included in social welfare are expenses for social security, welfare, veterans’ programs, education, housing, and other public programs.

The federal government is the major provider of social welfare benefits. In fact, most of the huge federal budget, approximately 90%, goes for social programs of one kind or another. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996—better known as The Welfare Reform Act of 1996—has had a significant impact on the cost of social welfare programs, the exact magnitude of which is still to be determined. By any standard, the human services industry is one of the largest industries in the United States. The Bureau of the Census lists many occupations that may be included under the heading of human services. The following chart highlights the projected percentage change between 2005 and 2015 of the fastest-growing occupations (Statistical Abstracts of the United States 2011, Bureau of the Census). The 2015–2025 Census Bureau figures indicate a continued growth pattern in these occupational areas.

Home health aides	145%
Human services workers	150%
Personal and home care aides	135%
Computer engineers and scientists	125%
Systems analysts	135%
Physical and corrective therapy aides	95%
Physical therapists	92%
Occupational therapy assistants and aides	81%
Teachers and special education	77%
Correction officers	81%
Child care	77%
Occupational therapists	75%
Psychologists	53%

## Human Services Workers

LO3

The personnel at human services agencies can be divided into four general categories: (1) those who provide help to recipients, (2) supervisory personnel, (3) administrators who determine the policies of the agency, and (4) support personnel who do clerical, maintenance, and security work. In addition, some settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes, require kitchen, housekeeping, and other support workers. In smaller agencies, workers sometimes have to do work in several of these categories.

A great many job titles, positions, and professions are included under the general heading of human services worker. These range from positions that require relatively little formal training, such as mental hospital aide and teacher assistant, to those that require extensive formal training and education. Clinical and counseling psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and nurses are included in the latter category. Chapter 6 goes into detail about a wide range of career options in the field.

There is considerable variation in the extent to which different professionals identify themselves as human services workers. Social workers, for example, have generally been more accepting of the term than have psychologists or psychiatrists. The term **human services worker** is more than a way of identifying workers in a particular field; it carries with it a certain attitude or philosophy about the field. The underlying idea is that the separate disciplines should emphasize what they have in common—serving people’s needs—rather than emphasize their differences.

Some activists would like to phase out specialty training in favor of generalist training in human services. However, there is considerable resistance to this idea from professionals who wish to preserve separate identities as psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, and so on. Apologies are offered if all this sounds confusing; it is confusing because the field of human services is undergoing rapid change. It is not possible to know for certain how human services workers of the future will be trained or what their job titles will be.

## Kinds of Help Provided

Human services provide many kinds of aid and services. Perhaps the most basic kind of direct aid consists of tangible items such as food, clothing, shelter, tools, and other useful articles. Victims of natural disasters and homeless poor persons may be in dire need of this kind of help. The Salvation Army and the Red Cross are well known for providing hot meals and shelter to homeless people.

In most situations, cash transfers can readily be exchanged for needed goods and services. Social security, welfare, and unemployment insurance are among the most important benefits of this kind because millions depend on them for economic survival. These cash benefits can be used in any way the recipient sees fit. This freedom worries some politicians, who fear that the money will be used for nonessential or even destructive items. Consequently, some benefits are offered with strings attached—in other words, the benefits can be used only for some specified purpose. Food stamps, for example, are given to eligible poor persons but can be used only to buy food. Another example is a housing subsidy paid directly to the landlord for a welfare recipient’s rent.

In addition to these forms of aid, some services are designed to increase clients’ capacities to gain satisfaction of needs by their own efforts. The next few paragraphs