

Career Opportunities in Social Justice

Social justice refers to the overall fairness of a society and the manner in which it divides its rewards and burdens upon groups of people. A government, for example, is generally charged with maintaining the welfare of all of its citizens; however, welfare is often not equal amongst all groups within society. Working with marginalized groups, social justice agents or advocates are concerned with bringing equality within society. For example, social justice work may include building a bridge to give a certain community better access to the rest of the country or ensuring that a business sector's hiring practices include considerations for candidates among all ethnic, age, and socio-economic classes.

Social justice carries two important dimensions. First, it consists of citizens exercising self-government by inspiring, working with, and organizing others to accomplish together common goals without the aid of government. Second, social justice measures progress and success not in an individual, but rather with respect to an entire community, city, state, or nation. One key to social justice is that it is carried out among groups of people rather than among individuals.

Because many of the causes in social justice are carried out by nonprofit organizations, the "Nonprofit Management" Career Guide has relevant information on Career Paths and Entry Salaries. The "Human Rights" Career Guide is another useful resource. In both guides, you will also find applicable information about expected salaries and qualifications for entering the field.

Social Justice Careers

Social justice careers are found primarily in the nonprofit and government sectors among non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations (IOs), think tanks, religious institutions, law firms and even law schools.

Social Justice Organizations are perhaps best organized according to the issue(s) they are concerned with. The list below categorizes organizations that do social justice work according to issue. It is by no means exhaustive. Note also that because some organizations cover more than one issue, or advocate for the rights of more than one group, they appear as duplicates in the various sections.

Organizations by Issue

Aging

- The Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, <http://www.theconsumervoice.org/>
- National Senior Citizens Law Center, www.nsclc.org/

Children, Youth, and Family

- Amnesty International, www.amnesty.org/
- Children's Defense Fund, www.childrensdefense.org/
- City Limits, www.citylimits.org/
- Equal Rights Advocates, www.equalrights.org/

- Freechild Youth Activism for Social Justice Webpage, freechild.org/youth_activism_2.htm
- INFACT, www.stopcorporateabuse.org
- Juvenile Law Center, www.jlc.org/index.php
- National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, www.nfprha.org/
- National Partnership for Women and Families, www.nationalpartnership.org/
- National Youth Advocacy Coalition, www.nyacyouth.org/
- GoodWeave, <http://www.goodweave.org/home.php>
- Southern Poverty Law Center, www.splcenter.org/
- UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund, www.unicef.org/

Civil Liberties & Individual Rights

- American Civil Liberties Union, www.aclu.org/
- Death Penalty Information Center, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/
- Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/
- Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., <http://www.lambdalegal.org/>
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, www.maldef.org/
- National Center for Lesbian Rights, www.nclrights.org/
- One World International, www.oneworld.net/
- UNICEF, www.unicef.org/
- Witness, www.witness.org/

Community Development

- Center for Neighborhood Technology, www.cnt.org/
- The Urban Institute, www.urban.org/

Disease and Disability

- ADA Watch, <http://www.accessiblesociety.org/topics/ada/adawatchgroup.htm>
- AIDS United, www.aidsunited.org/
- Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, www.bazelon.org/
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, www.dredf.org/
- Mental Health America, www.nmha.org/

Education

- Education Law Center, www.elc-pa.org/
- International Education and Resource Network (iEARN), www.iearn.org/
- National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA), fomax.lunarpages.com/suspended.page/ <http://www.nceaonline.org/>
- National Education Association, www.nea.org
- Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA), www.teachingforchange.org/
- Rethinking Schools, www.rethinkingschools.org/
- Schools for Chiapas, www.schoolsforchiapas.org/

Environment and Agriculture

- Global Exchange, www.globalexchange.org/

- Greenpeace USA, www.greenpeace.org/usa/
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, www.iatp.org/
- International Rivers Network, www.irn.org/
- League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, www.voteenvironment.org/
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, www.sustainableagriculture.net/
- International Society for Ecology and Culture, www.isec.org.uk/
- Rural Advancement Foundation International, www.etcgroup.org/
- Sierra Club Foundation, www.sierraclub.org/foundation/
- The International Society for Ecology and Culture, <http://www.localfutures.org/>
- United Farm Workers, www.ufw.org/

Homelessness

- Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy, www.foodfirst.org/
- National Coalition on the Homeless, www.nationalhomeless.org/
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, www.nlchp.org/
- National Low Income Housing Coalition, www.nlihc.org/

Indigenous Peoples

- Cultural Survival, <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/>
- International Indian Treaty Council, www.treatycouncil.org/
- Native American Rights Fund, www.narf.org/
- The Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism, www.ipcb.org/
- Zapatistas, www.ezln.org/

Labor

- AFL-CIO, www.aflcio.org/
- Campaign for Labor Rights, <http://www.clrlabor.org/wordpress/>
- Clean Clothes Campaign, www.cleanclothes.org/
- Green America, <http://www.greenamerica.org/>
- Global Exchange, www.globalexchange.org/
- International Labor Organization, www.ilo.org/
- International Labor Rights Forum, www.laborrights.org/
- Jobs With Justice, www.jwj.org/
- Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center, www.las-elc.org/
- Maquila Solidarity Network, www.maquilasolidarity.org/
- Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network, mhssn.igc.org/
- National Employment Lawyers Association, www.nela.org/home.cfm
- Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights, <http://www.globallabourrights.org/>
- Sweatshop Watch, http://www.change.org/sweatshop_watch
- UNITE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees), www.unitehere.org/

Non-violence

- American Friends Service Committee, www.afsc.org/
- Amnesty International USA, www.amnesty.org/
- Institute for Policy Studies, www.ips-dc.org/

- PEACE POWER!, www.bfsr.org/PEACEPOWER.html
- Peacenet, www.igc.org/index.html
- Prison Activist Resource Center, www.prisonactivist.org/
- States United to Prevent Gun Violence, www.supgv.org/
- The Nonviolence Web, www.nonviolence.org/
- Violence Policy Center; www.vpc.org/

Other

- National Immigration Forum, www.immigrationforum.org/
- National Veterans Legal Services Program, www.nvlsp.org/

Poverty

- Center for Law and Social Policy, www.clasp.org/
- DATA - Debt, Aids, and Trade in Africa, www.data.org/
- Focus on the Global South, www.focusweb.org/
- Food Research & Action Center, www.frac.org/
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, www.iatp.org/
- Legal Aid Society of New York, www.legal-aid.org/
- Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, www.povertylaw.org/
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, www.nlchp.org/
- Oxfam America, www.oxfamamerica.org/
- Southern Poverty Law Center, www.splcenter.org/
- The Urban Institute, www.urban.org/
- United for a Fair Economy, www.faireconomy.org/
- United Nations Development Program, www.undp.org/

Welfare

- Methodist Healthcare Ministries, www.mhm.org/
- Physicians for Social Responsibility, www.psr.org/
- National Center for Law and Economic Justice, <http://www.nclej.org/>

Women

- Center for Reproductive Rights, www.reproductiverights.org/
- Equal Rights Advocates, www.equalrights.org/
- Legal Momentum, www.legalmomentum.org/
- MADRE, www.madre.org/
- National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League Foundation, www.naral.org/
- National Organization for Women, www.now.org/
- National Partnership for Women and Families, www.nationalpartnership.org/
- National Women's Law Center, www.nwlc.org/
- STITCH, www.stitchonline.org/index.asp
- Women's Environment and Development Organization <http://www.wedo.org/>
- Women's Law Project, www.womenslawproject.org/
- WomensNet, www.igc.org/

- WomenWatch, www.wedo.org/

Additional Resources on Social Justice

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI), one of the nation's foremost public interest law and policy centers, has been at the front lines of Chicago's most pressing social justice issues for over thirty years. Dedicated to equal justice and to enhancing the quality and equity of life for all people living in the Chicago region, BPI's staff of lawyers and policy specialists uses a variety of approaches, including litigation, research, advocacy, community organizing, and collaboration.

CorpWatch

CorpWatch provides indispensable resources and news about globalization and justice struggles around the world. An online issue library includes topics such as biotechnology, Globalization 101, grassroots globalization, sweatshops, the WTO and the IMF/World Bank. A similarly valuable but unrelated site is Corporate Watch.

The Independent Media Center

This is considered the CNN of the global social justice movement. The Center acts as a clearinghouse of information and provides up-to-the minute reports, photos, audio, and video footage of global social justice struggles through its website. Launched during the Seattle WTO protests of late 1999, Indymedia is a fascinating, colorful site.

Institute for Global Communications (IGC)

"The mission of IGC is to advance the work of progressive organizations and individuals for peace, justice, economic opportunity, human rights, democracy and environmental sustainability through strategic use of online technologies." IGC is an outstanding resource, with a fabulous search engine that is linked to social justice networks of all kinds.

International Forum on Globalization

Begun as an alliance of over 60 scholars, activists and writers, the IFG has sponsored important conferences to evaluate the social and environmental impact of globalization. They have published numerous booklets. Their website features worthwhile resources on the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, among others.

Seton Hall Law School Center for Social Justice

The Seton Hall Law School Center for Social Justice is both a "for-credit" and pro-bono clinical program that seeks to allow students to engage in a legal apprenticeship, representing real-life clients in cases with real-life outcomes. It serves law students in much the same way that a residency program helps develop medical students into physicians. Under the supervision of professors, students have the opportunity to practice in all facets of actual litigation.

50 Years Is Enough

A coalition of over 200 grassroots, faith-based, policy, women's, social—and economic-justice, youth, solidarity, labor, and development organizations dedicated to the profound

transformation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Its website features provide classroom-ready fact sheets about globalization issues, especially about the consequences of the Third World debt crisis.

Publications

A Guide to Careers in Community Development, Paul C. Brophy and Alice Shabecoff (2001), available in CAS Library.

Become a Leader for Social Justice, Advocacy Institute (2001), text found in pdf format at www.advocacy.org/publications/pdf/becomealeader.pdf.

Careers for Dreamers and Doers, Lilly Cohen and Dennis R. Young (1989), available in CAS Library.

How to Live Your Dream of Volunteering Overseas, Joseph Collins, Stefano DeZerega, and Zahara Heckscher (2002) Available in CAS Library.

Jobs and Careers with Nonprofit Organizations: Profitable Opportunities with NonProfits, Ron and Caryl Krannich, Ph.D.s (1999), available in CAS Library.

Working for Change: Making a Career in International Public Service, Derick W. Brinkerhoff and Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff (2005), available in CAS Library.