

2011-12 Legislative Principles

The New York State Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-NYS) is comprised of 11,000 members throughout the State of New York. Nationally, NASW is the largest professional organization of social workers with 150,000 members in 56 Chapters across the world. Social workers are professionals who hold bachelors, masters or doctoral degrees in social work. Social workers practice in the fields of health, mental health, child welfare, public welfare, vocational rehabilitation, aging, family services, education, criminal justice, and industry. They are administrators, clinicians, policy analysts, researchers, educators, community organizers, and elected officials.

NASW is committed to working within the legislative arena to promote policies and legislation that support social work practice, enhance the lives of the people we serve, and promote social and economic justice. Professional social workers contribute a unique perspective to the social policy debate, one that includes the relationship between public policies and the people affected by them.

Mission Statement

The mission of the New York State Chapter of NASW is to promote and advocate throughout New York State for the:

- *strength, unity, identity and status of the social work profession,*
- *the enhancement of social work practice, and*
- *policies, services and programs that promote social and economic justice.*

The following principles, culled from our chapter's mission will be utilized in conjunction with membership feedback in the development of our 2011-12 legislative priorities. These principles are also utilized by the Board of Directors, Advocacy and Government Relations Committee and Chapter staff to assess the legislative advocacy requests from members and coalition partners.

“The strength, unity, identity and status of the social work profession”

NASW-NYS recognizes that social workers possess the specialized knowledge, values, and skills necessary to serve vulnerable populations and to address social problems through the implementation of effective social service delivery systems. As such, NASW-NYS is committed to assuring the work of professional social workers is respected, protected, and adequately compensated through our advocacy work. We are the voice of the social work profession in the

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legislative arena through our work on policies that promote and encourage: fair and consistent performance and productivity standards, including maintaining appropriate client/staff ratios; the inclusion of social workers on interdisciplinary teams in all facets of employment; policies that encourage competitive compensation of social workers through all forms of reimbursement structures, be they public or private; and policies that effectively direct the practice of social work through the appropriate licensing and regulation implementation.

“The enhancement of social work practice”

NASW-NYS promotes and encourages policies that maintain and promote high standards of practice, including broadening access to educational opportunities in the field of social work through loan forgiveness, enhancing the continuing education of social workers and by promoting best practices through cutting edge research.

“Policies, services and programs that promote social and economic justice.”

NASW-NYS is committed to ensuring that every New Yorker, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, citizenship status, place of residence, veterans status, disability or socioeconomic status, has access to the resources and services necessary to maintain at least a minimum quality standard of living through the promotion and encouragement of policies that afford all citizens access to economic security, educational opportunities, appropriate health and mental health care and affordable housing. NASW-NYS recognizes the importance of improving social conditions in respect to poverty, unemployment, and discrimination, and will therefore support initiatives that address these issues, as well as other forms of injustice.

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