



SOCIAL WORK ALLIANCE



NYS Licensed Social Worker Loan Forgiveness Program

The National Association of Social Workers, New York State Chapter, and New York City Chapters and SEIU New York's Health and Human Services Union support the continuation of loan forgiveness for social workers. The NYS Licensed Social Worker Loan Forgiveness Program encourages professional social workers to accept and continue employment in mission critical human service areas of health, mental health, substance abuse, aging, HIV/AIDS and child welfare or communities with multilingual needs. Governor-Elect Andrew Cuomo has identified this as a priority of his administration in order to meet the growing demand for high-skilled licensed social work professionals.

Problem Statement

Recruiting and retaining social workers is a current problem for the high-demand critical human service areas. At the same time, there is a growing need for an expanded workforce of social workers who represent the diverse cultures and languages of the communities that social workers serve. The economic crisis has created environmental factors which are known to contribute to increased incidence of mental illness, substance abuse, suicide, violence, and crime. Although the economic crisis has forced the State to make tough financial decisions, it is important not to cut programs which attract the very workers which address and alleviate such issues; a fiscal credit to the State. Social workers have a positive impact on the State, addressing some of the toughest social problems, and working with the most vulnerable populations. At a time when social workers are needed most, reducing avenues which increases the workforce could have a devastating effect on the client populations social workers serve.

Purpose of Loan Forgiveness

To increase the number of qualified and professionally trained social workers employed in critical human service areas as identified by NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), with priority given to social workers that represent the diverse cultures and languages of the communities that social workers serve.

It has been demonstrated by human resource professionals, that student loan forgiveness, in exchange for service, is an effective incentive to encourage trained individuals to accept and retain social work jobs in underserved regions throughout the state.

Budget Implications for FY 2010 to 2011

Continue the current budget of \$1 million.

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