

# National Association of Social Workers, Florida Chapter 2019 Legislative & Policy Advocacy Agenda

The **National Association of Social Workers, Florida Chapter (NASW-FL)** is part of the world's largest organization of professional social workers, and represents approximately 4,500 professional social workers in Florida.

## Legislative Priorities

- Increase funding and accessibility for mental health with a focus on school safety. Increase behavioral health services to address the opioid crisis in Florida.
- Promote and support legislative efforts and policies that are aligned with social, economic and environmental justice and oppose policies and actions that are not.
- Promote Telehealth and social work mobility licensure legislation.

## Legislative Agenda

### I. MENTAL, BEHAVIORAL AND MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES

- \* Support funding for mental health services in schools.
- \* Support accessible and affordable health care for all families, including Medicaid recipients, and the use of all federal funds to expand care.
- \* Promote legislation that encourages smart decarceration, and uses mental and behavioral health treatment options rather than prison.
- \* Ensure involuntary commitment procedures that best protect the clients and the public.
- \* Support the expansion and improvement of mental health and behavioral health services available to people currently serving in the military, veterans and their families.
- \* Allow licensed clinical social workers to provide and be reimbursed for Medicaid mental health services independently.
- \* Increase mental, behavioral and medical health services for people who are aging, people with disabilities, their caregivers and individuals marginalized because of sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity and lack of access to care.
- \* Increase services and funding to address the opioid crisis in Florida.

### II. SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE

- \* Support hiring school social workers to provide mental health services.
- \* Support fair and marketable reimbursement rates for social workers providing mental health and behavioral health services through public and private insurance carriers.
- \* Ensure that caseloads for child welfare investigators and dependency case managers are set at a level to provide optimal care.
- \* Support the Florida Legislature in their efforts to recruit, train, and retain qualified child welfare staff, including promoting full utilization of Title IV-E funds.
- \* Explore the need for licensure and/or certification for bachelor's level social workers and non-clinical master's level social work.

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## II. SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE (continued)

- \* Encourage the Legislature to recognize the importance of the social work profession, workforce challenges, and trends in employment. Support programs which address safety concerns for social workers.
- \* Revise the social work licensure law to allow for greater mobility of the social work license.

## III. SOCIAL JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY AND DIVERSITY

- \* Promote juvenile diversion programs to decrease the disproportionate representation of marginalized populations in the juvenile justice system.
- \* Promote criminal justice laws and sentencing guidelines that are reasonable, equitable, free of bias, flexible to the situation, and protect the public.
- \* Support programs that reduce homelessness or assist people who are homeless, and that enhance affordable housing options.
- \* Advocate for legislation that encourages voter engagement, includes but not limited to, the right to vote for people formerly incarcerated, on probation or on parole, and discourages legislation that limits opportunity and accessibility to voting, such as voter suppression efforts.
- \* Promote legislation which allows services and employment for all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disabilities.

NASW is a membership organization that promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the effective functioning and well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its work and through its advocacy.

### NASW Florida Chapter

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