

Find updates about our priorities in red.

The National Association of Social Workers - Minnesota Chapter (NASW-MN) works with coalition partners and members to advocate for legislation that aligns with our professional values and ethics. While we include a list of policy positions that is meant to be comprehensive, we name specific priorities for the 2022 legislative session.

Racial equity and intersectionality are key principles across all of the issue areas and policies in this legislative agenda. These principles seek to reduce barriers and change structures, policies, and practices in our agencies and systems that sustain the ongoing harm from the legacies of slavery, colonialism, genocide, segregation, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other systems of oppression. We support equitable, intersectional solutions to benefit the well-being of all, and will integrate these frameworks into our routine decision-making processes as we work toward change.

Legislative Priorities 2023

Elevate and diversify the social work profession:

- Lay the groundwork for the passage of the social work interstate compact once viable in MN.
 - Language developed to accommodate potential changes to exam requirements in states.
 - Passage deferred until the Board of Social Work understands fiscal impact.
- Develop alternative pathways for social work licensing to ensure broader representation in the profession.
 - Health and Human Service Chairs prefer licensing changes to come in the 2024 session.
 - Created language to expand provisional licensing options.
- Expand title protection to include county social workers to ensure only those with a social work degree can be called a social worker when employed by the county.
 - HF2686, sponsored by Rep Jessica Hanson.
 - Sharing information this session and pursuing passage in the 2024 session.
- Ensure congruence in mental health laws so that social workers are recognized as mental health providers consistently in state statutes.
- Ensure social work services are reimbursed at similar rates to other professionals.
 - Allow school districts to access federal Medical Assistance for social work mental health services.*
 - SF1028/HF1175 included in House and Senate Education omnibus bills, SF2684/HF2497.
- Allow one time licensing fee waivers or reductions for social workers and other mental health professionals, with funds provided to and administered by the Board of Social Work and other regulatory boards.
 - The Board of Social Work did not support this idea, so we were unable to pursue funding.

*Based on Legislative Agenda of MN School Social Work Association

**Based on the Legislative Agenda of the Mental Health Legislative Network

***Based on Legislative Agenda of Homes for All

- Increase funding for school support personnel, including school social workers.**
 - SF56/HF8 included in House and Senate Education omnibus bills, SF2684/HF2497.
 - The Senate's school support personnel language requires districts to invest matching funding. The House invests \$76 in the biennium and in the base. The Senate invests \$100 million in the biennium and the base.
- Close loopholes that allow services to create new job titles with similar expectations as social workers, working around licensing laws.
 - NASW-MN opposes efforts to expand licensing exemptions, and supports efforts to provide clearer language in bills referencing social work positions.
 - Chairs determined that any licensing language would not be heard this year, so discussion about this topic was limited.
- Pursue opportunities to make social work education more affordable and accessible:
 - Expand mental health provider loan forgiveness grants to include LICSWs obtaining required supervision hours.**
 - Included in SF1679/HF1436. This component was included in the Senate Health and Human Services omnibus bill, SF2995, but not the House Health omnibus bill, HF2930.
 - Increase funding for mental health provider supervision grant program.**
 - Included in SF1679/HF1436. This component was included in both the Senate Health and Human Services omnibus bill, SF2995 and the House Health omnibus bill, HF2930. The House bill includes more funding than the Senate.
 - Create and fund mental health provider grants for tuition reimbursement for employees pursuing their MSW.**
 - Included in SF1679/HF1436. This component was included in the Senate Health and Human Services omnibus bill, SF2995, but not the House Health omnibus bill, HF2930.

Ensure accessible and affordable healthcare options that serve the whole person:

- Seek permanent funding with public insurance options for mental health services through telehealth while maintaining parity with private insurance.
 - This was included in both the Senate Health and Human Services omnibus bill, SF2995 and the House Health omnibus bill, HF2930.
- Enact Paid Family Medical Leave.
 - SF2/HF2. This is a stand-alone bill. It is included in the Governor's recommendation. It has not yet passed the House or Senate.

Reimagine Community Safety:

- Create supportive non-police response services to respond to non-violent crisis situations.
 - SF2909/HF2890, public safety omnibus bills provide funding to local entities to develop community safety plans. The House bill includes more specific language about mental health crisis response, while the Senate bill states the "social workers or mental health professionals are sent as first responders when calls 34.27 for service indicate that an individual is having a mental health crisis."
- Increase police accountability for actions while on duty.
 - SF2909/HF2890, public safety omnibus bills.
- Enact common sense gun laws inclusive of requiring background checks for all gun purchases and/or transfers.
 - Expanded to private gun transfers SF2909/HF2890, public safety omnibus bills.
- Legalize and regulate recreational cannabis, which must include the release of all non-violent, low level possession offenders and the expungement of their past criminal records relating to low-level

cannabis possession.

- SF73/HF100. This is a stand-alone bill. Language between the bodies do not match and it will require its own conference committee.

Expand affordable, accessible, and safe housing:

- Improve and increase housing stability in Minnesota.***
 - SF2566/HF2335 is the Housing committee omnibus bill.
 - The Senate Health and Human Services omnibus bill, SF2995, and the House Health omnibus bill, HF2930, includes funding to address homelessness.