

## Employment Benefits

### Policy Statement

All social workers should have access to a comprehensive benefits package to meet their needs for leave time, health and dental care, disability and life insurance, and retirement. NASW's standards state that workers—whether they are paid through salaries, fee-for-service, or other means—should have access to benefits, and that part-time workers should receive the same pay and (prorated) benefits as full-time, permanent employees.

### Standards of Practice

- NASW supports the principle that all social workers should be paid equitably for all work performed. Fee-for-service rates should reflect wages that enable social workers to independently purchase benefits and to maintain a standard of living commensurate with their education and experience.
- Social workers employed part-time should receive prorated benefits.

### Benefits should be comprehensive and include:

- Health insurance with options that include a plan that allows, when feasible, new workers to keep their current providers and cover family needs in a manner consistent with state law.
- Dental care.
- Life insurance.
- Unemployment compensation.
- Workers' compensation.
- Pension contribution or Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA) plan.
- Short and long term disability protection.
- Family and medical leave.
- Holidays, including the right to observe religious holidays.
- Vacation.
- Personal time.
- Sick time.
- Other areas including: jury duty, military leave, bereavement, voting, and court testimony.
- Reimbursement of fees and release time sufficient to meet continuing education licensing requirements.
- Flexible work schedules when feasible.
- Personal malpractice insurance.

## Workplace Safety

Work-related violence against social workers occurs in virtually every practice setting, including clients' homes. We have a responsibility to maximize safety in the workplace for ourselves, our co-workers, and our clients. While workers have a responsibility to advocate for optimal safety precautions, employers bear the primary responsibility for ensuring safe working conditions.

### Every agency that employs social workers or train social work interns should have:

- A comprehensive written safety policy that is updated regularly and known to all staff and students.
- A specific safety plan for each unit or division of the agency. This plan should be updated and rehearsed at least once a year and when new staff are hired.
- Safety equipment as needed.
- A well developed relationship with local law enforcement so police will respond promptly and in the manner needed for the situation.
- A plan to handle the aftermath of any assault on staff, or clients who may have been affected.
- Private practitioners should have a safety plan and appropriate safety equipment as well.

Extensive safety guidelines, developed by the NASW Committee for the Study and Prevention of Violence against Social Workers, are available on NASW MA Chapter's website: [www.naswma.org](http://www.naswma.org). Training and consultation are also available.

#### APPROVED BY THE:

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# Workplace Standards

for

Social

Workers

The purpose of this document is to define standards of professional practice for workplaces that maintain the interrelated goals of delivering effective social work services and providing a supportive work environment.

## NASW Mission

The mission of the Massachusetts Chapter of NASW is:

*To advance professional social work practice and the profession, and to promote human rights, social and economic justice, and unimpeded access to services for all.*

It is this fundamental mission that provides both the context and purpose for the following standards.

## Introduction

NASW supports agency and social worker efforts to provide quality care to clients in a time of limited financial resources. More than ever, it is necessary for agencies to establish policies and procedures that safeguard and promote high standards of professional practice, including equitable compensation and benefits necessary to maintain a stable, high quality workforce. To these ends, NASW believes it is essential for organizations and individual social workers to engage in advocacy efforts to secure rate increases from state and federal government, managed care organizations and other third-party payers. NASW joins social workers and agencies in working for fair compensation and benefits and for the provision of quality services.

Changes in health and human services have resulted in generally reduced incomes for social workers when adjusted for inflation. One such change is the expansion in fee-for-service practice which is a system that can discourage important ancillary work, staff collaboration, and care coordination with collateral providers. We encourage fair reimbursement for such services, as indicated in this document, for fee-for-service providers, private practitioners, and salaried social workers. Fee-for-service should be used as a supplement to a core of full-time staff to provide greater flexibility for individual practitioners and agency administrators, rather than as a means to reduce the number of salaried positions.

NASW believes that human service and health care organizations must embrace and adhere to standards that guarantee social workers equitable professional compensation, benefits, and working conditions.

## Salary, Fee-for-Service, & Private Practice Rates

The following guidelines take into account both current reimbursement levels and NASW's assessment of adequate social worker compensation consistent with educational credentials, licensure, and experience in the field. Reimbursement for similar services performed by other health and social service occupations is factored into this assessment. Data collected from a 2007 statewide NASW survey of licensed social workers provided the impetus for these recommendations. Previous salary recommendations (2000) by National NASW, adjusted for inflation, were also considered. Recommended ranges are offered as social work is practiced in a wide variety of settings:

### FULL-TIME SALARIED POSITIONS

BSW: Beginning	\$32,000-38,000
BSW: 2+ years experience	\$35,000-42,000
MSW: Beginning	\$42,000-50,000
MSW: 2-5 years experience	\$48,000-60,000
MSW: 6-12 years experience	\$60,000-82,000

### FEE-FOR-SERVICE POSITIONS

MSW: Beginning	\$38-44 per hour
MSW: 2+ years experience	\$44-50 per hour

### PRIVATE PRACTICE

Individual session	\$110-160 per hour
Group session	\$40-60 per hour

It is recognized that not all employers will be able to meet these guidelines. However, it is expected that those who do not will engage in a planful process to improve the low salaries within a reasonable time frame.

## Supervision

### Policy Statement

Social workers should receive supervision from qualified professionals at regularly scheduled intervals, appropriate to the level of experience, volume, and complexity of the caseload. Agencies should be responsible for providing and compensating supervision time.

## Standards of Practice

- New MSWs and LCSWs should receive face to face scheduled supervision, consistent with the social work licensing regulations\*.
- All social workers, regardless of licensure level, should have readily available consultation and supervision from persons familiar with the population served.

## Caseload Size & Productivity Requirements

### Policy Statement

Caseload size should be appropriate to the program and population served and should reflect the complexity of the cases. Agencies should reimburse clinicians for attendance at meetings and arranging ancillary services in order to provide a responsible standard of care and meet any applicable licensing and insurance regulations.

### Standards of Practice

- Increased time for review and coordination should be given to more complex and high risk cases, and those with multiple providers.
- Social workers should be paid for all services that are provided for clients including multiple and/or crisis visits, collateral contacts, treatment planning, case review, case coordination, case consultation, and documentation.
- Social workers who provide out of office or outreach services should be reimbursed for travel costs and paid at their hourly rate for travel time. Additionally, extensive travel should result in an adjustment in the size of the caseload.
- Productivity goals and fee-for-service rates should be set to provide sufficient reimbursed time for case planning, review, and coordination to meet clinical standards.
- Quality assurance procedures and policies should be consistent for salaried and fee-for-service work; social workers should be compensated for time necessary to meet these requirements.
- Time for mandatory staff and administrative meetings should be compensated at the social worker's usual rate.

\*Board of Registration of Social Workers: 617-727-3064