

## **SOCIAL WORK REINVESTMENT**

NASW, Iowa Chapter, believes that social workers play a central role in the delivery of services necessary for the support and well-being of individuals, children, and families in Iowa. NASW affirms the use of public resources to support the recruitment and retention of a professionally educated, highly skilled, diverse, and well-paid social work labor force.

### ***Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable Iowans***

In order to best meet the needs of vulnerable Iowans, the current demographics of the state of Iowa should be reflected in Iowa's social work profession. Three issues that should be provided particular attention are 1) the increasing ethnic and linguistic diversity of the state's population, 2) the continued rural make up of the state's population, and 3) the aging of the state's population.

### ***Social Work Labor Force Issues***

In the decade ahead, the state will face a growing demand for professionally trained and credentialed social workers to meet the needs of vulnerable Iowans. Data from Iowa Workforce Development (2012, October) projects the demand for social workers will increase by 2.2% per year through 2022. Both the aging of the current social work labor force, and the issues related to recruiting and retaining the next generation of practitioners raise questions about whether the profession will be able to meet these future labor force needs.

### ***Recommendations***

- Develop and fund a state loan repayment program for Iowa social workers at all levels of practice, not just those at the LISW-level.
- Develop a marketing plan for the loan repayment program that will target communities underrepresented in the profession.
- Forgive educational loans for individuals who make a commitment to work in underserved geographic areas or designated fields of practice.
- Expand state funding to support social work education for DHS case workers, funded through the Title IV-E program.
- Provide educational funds to recruit and educate social workers from minority communities.
- Provide funding for cross-cultural, bilingual, and geriatric education and training of social workers.
- Ensure that funding of human service programs is linked to salaries that provide a living wage and are commensurate with a worker's credentials, experience, skills and caseload size.
- Enact legislation to limit the title "social worker" to individuals who have an accredited degree or a license in social work.

The full version of this statement with references can be found at <https://nasw-heartland.site-ym.com/?183>