

Social Work Workforce Task Force

Report to New Mexico Legislative Health & Human Services Committee

Social Work Workforce Crisis & Evolution

November 28, 2022

Where we were 1990 through 2010

- ✓ Almost all persons doing Social Work are Licensed Social Workers-only 6% vacancy rate
- ✓ The Governor's Task Force on Professionalism meets monthly to monitor and improve hiring in CPS
- ✓ Universities and state Agencies work in Partnership
- ✓ Over 90% of all BSW and MSW's pass the exam
- ✓ Research by Universities is funded and shared with agencies
- ✓ NASW holds induction ceremonies each year
- ✓ A federal court order guides CPS to best practices
- ✓ Millions of federal dollars fund training, educational costs, faculty and, supervisors in each Social Work School
- ✓ Retreats and respite are available to social workers to reduce burn out
- ✓ New Mexico is known as a leader in Social Work with national leaders

Today's Crisis in the New Mexico Social Work Workforce

- Stark shortage of Social Workers across all fields of practice such as behavioral health, LGBTQ, criminal justice, child welfare, schools, gerontology, health, poverty, early childhood, social policy, administration and management, etc.
- CYFD: 849 Social Work positions; only 179 are licensed
- CYFD: Retention rate 53% over the past 3 years
- We cannot totally educate our way out of this crisis
- We must competitively recruit out-of-state
- Licensure exam pass rates are one of the lowest in the U.S.
- Need to maintain Social Workers in the profession
- Need to sustain a Social Work workforce in New Mexico

Social Work Practice Act—1990 NMAC 61-31-1

“Except as otherwise provided in the Social Work Practice Act, it is unlawful for an individual not licensed as a social worker to:

- (1) engage in the practice of social work;
- (2) hold the individual out as a social worker or claim to be a social worker or use the title of social worker; or
- (3) use any abbreviation or title that implies or would lead the public to believe that the individual is a social worker or is licensed to practice social work”.

"For thirty years studies support the recommendation...agencies continue to offer...training programs and hire degreed social workers."

Task Force Purpose

The Social Work Workforce Task Force was created with the understanding that vulnerable populations in New Mexico require professional social services and protection; with the purpose of developing a strong, healthy Social Work workforce in our communities.

Mission

- Grow the state's social worker workforce in quantity and quality to meet the needs of all client systems
- Assess and remove barriers to cultural and diverse appropriate practice, education, credentialing, and employment of social workers
- Identify unmet workforce needs in emerging roles for Social Workers to better serve New Mexicans
- Collaborate with other workforce efforts and identify barriers

Rationale for the Social Work Workforce

WHEREAS, vulnerable populations in New Mexico require professional social services and protection; and

WHEREAS, the research shows that social services are most efficiently delivered by professional social workers, and

WHEREAS, the Social Work Practice Act requires that only licensed Social Workers practice social work or are titled, Social Workers, and

WHEREAS, diverse, inclusive and culturally applicable practice is required by licensed Social Workers, and

WHEREAS, the process of educating, credentialing, and employing social workers must be continually assessed for systemic racism and corrected as necessary, and

WHEREAS, Social Work is an essential profession to address social determinants of health, and

WHEREAS, social work is the largest profession engaged in behavioral health services, and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has the highest suicide rate in the nation at a rate of 25 per 100 thousand people and

WHEREAS, police, school, health care, housing and other societal institutions are reorganizing to focus on their primary functions thus requiring social work professionals to increase their roles, and

WHEREAS, Social Workers play a key role in working with Veterans, and

WHEREAS, Social Workers are critical in work with abuse and neglect with children, adults and family members, and

WHEREAS, Social Workers serve as critical case manager's, planning and linking those in need with appropriate services, and

WHEREAS, Social Workers play a critical role in social research and policy, and

WHEREAS, an underdeveloped Social Work workforce failure to meet social needs impacts the economy of the state, and

WHEREAS, the Social Work workforce needs to improve, strengthen, and sustain social services systems performance in New Mexico.

THEREFORE, the Social Work Workforce Task Force was formed and funded through Senator Ortiz y Pino.

Social Work Workforce Task Force Organization

Action Teams

Licensure—Chair, Dr. Eli Fresquez

To review licensure protection of the public policies for both title and practice. Recommend Rules, fees, process of licensure and enforcement of Act.

Challenges: Turnover of ADA's, lack of adequate staff (\$1.3M unused fees in account), rules not in line with Social Work Practice Act., re-do license survey form

Retention and Recruitment—Chair, Dr. Jerry Harrison

Identify barriers to retention, recruitment, and reciprocity. This includes examining the licensure process and identifying ways to recruit individuals from both within and outside of New Mexico to practice in our communities.

Challenges: Adequate supervision, salaries, loan forgiveness, self-care

Capacity Building Committee—Chair, Dr. Melissa Moyer

Examine university educational programs through data on curriculum fit, graduation rates, demographics, communities of origin, level of education (BSW & MSW), financial aid access, loan forgiveness, and student debt.

Challenges: Federal title IV E funds not fully used, faculty salaries low even with \$50M, MSW student tuition and debt, transition from school to work.

Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Committee—Chairs, Kaity Ellis and Theresa Ortiz

Identify common practices that may be biased or prejudiced concerning gender, race, ethnicity, disability, economic standing, geographic location, LGBTQ+, and countless other aspects of identity.

Challenges: barriers to becoming social workers for some. Assure greater competence in diversity and inclusion in social work practice.

Workforce and Professional Enhancement—Chair, Dr. Kim Knox

Identify barriers to accurate public representation of what Social Workers do. Avenues of recruitment from early grades through university advisement.

Challenge: provide public, media, and organizations' support for Social Work. Promote an understanding of Social Work that will enhance organizations and communities to utilize Social Workers.

Research Team—Chair, Dr. Katherine Ortega Courtney

Collected, analyze and share results with committees and agencies. Research requests from committees.

Challenge: Funding to compile resources for all fields of Social Work practice on workforce issues. Obtain title I-VE funds through the Schools of Social Work for Child Welfare evaluations and research.

Administration

Task Force Chair- Alvin L. Sallee, A.C.S.W., L.I.S.W., Chair, Social Work Task Force, Professor Emeritus, New Mexico State University

Task Force Co-Chair- Eli J. Fresquez, L.I.S.W., L.C.S.W., Ph.D. **Task**

Force Contractor- Innovative Executive Quality Solutions, LLC. - Cornerstone to Excellence Dr. Veronica Sanchez, DSW, LISW, LCSW

Identified Details of Workforce Requirements:

1. Pay increase for state agency supervisors which is higher than workers--who make overtime.
2. Paid internships for social work students and instructors--funding could go through University Field programs. Funding for Rural field placements for BSW and MSW
3. Additional school social workers--see LFC detailed data.
4. Reduced or free tuition for MSW students
5. Increase pay for state Social Workers by \$12,000 median--we have data from Texas where it helped with retention and IVE.
6. Add position to RLD (funded from \$1.3M in fees for social work which RLD has) to process provisional licenses from new graduates and revised survey form for UNM.
7. Add a fund for paying Social Work Board approved supervisors to oversee supervision of LMSW workers so they can take the LISW/LCSW level exam.
8. Request Administration to publicize pay back programs for Social Work students
9. Fellowships for post LCSW's with agencies
10. Request Administration--HED to monitor \$50M endowed faculty positions to be sure they are producing more Social Work graduates who stay in New Mexico.
11. Blue Ribbon Commission with required yearly updates to the Legislature on Social Work Workforce issues--in a form institutionalize monitoring to assure we do not lose ground in providing social work services to the people of our state.

Successful Workforce Tasks

- Increase support for integration of education and regulation – assist in securing licensure.
- Refine Social Work Act and Provision to meet service needs
- Adequately compensate and hold accountable social workers for delivery of competent and sensitive services
- Fund oversight programs to ensure sustainability in the education, training, retention and promotion of social workers
- Support social work professions by providing leadership training and promotion to high level administrative positions.

New Mexico Schools of Social Work

(During COVID unofficial data)

Total number of Social Work students enrolled in 2021-2022 school year in New Mexico:

- MSW 930
- BSW 444

Graduating--all Social Work students from all four Schools 2019-2021 (three years):

- MSW 781
- BSW 474

New Mexico Social Work Residents graduating past three years and per year:

- MSW 373=131 per year
- BSW 255= 85 per year

Total number of Social Work Faculty all four Universities

- Full-time tenure track = 40

Building a Successful Workforce

- ✓ Leadership
 - ✓ High-quality diverse, and inclusive
 - ✓ Ongoing strong partnerships
 - ✓ Retention and Recruitment programs
 - ✓ Sustainability
 - ✓ Licensed Social Workers have lower turnover rates
1. Prioritize and expanding strategies for workforce development
 2. Building partnerships
 3. Fostering organizational change
 4. Addressing race equality and inclusion
 5. Initiating data driven systems
 6. Fostering conditions for workforce excellence
 7. Generating pipelines for recruitment
 8. Ensuring competency for students
 9. Transition from school to work
 10. Building a resilient workforce

“At the heart of workforce excellence is the focus on racial equality and a commitment to diversification of the social work workforce ensuring representation of the children, families and communities served including Tribal Nations.” (Anderson & Briar-Lawson, page 451)

Strategic Child Welfare Agency-University Partnerships to Advance Workforce Development edited by Gary R. Anderson and Katharine Briar-Lawson, published by CWLA, 2022.

New book published by CWLA, by Dr. Anderson and Dean Briar-Lawson

“Strategic Child Welfare Agency-University Partnerships to Advance Workforce Development”?

Below is the information to obtain a copy from CWLA:

<https://netforumpro.com/eweb/shopping/shopping.aspx?site=cwla&webcode=shopping&cart=0&shopsearch=workforce>



Note: *Numerous research studies are available on workforce upon request*