



THE TIME IS RIGHT

FOR SOCIAL WORK

THEME & RATIONALE FOR SOCIAL WORK MONTH — MARCH 2022

The need for social workers is great.

There are nearly 720,000 social workers in our nation. That number is expected to grow by 12 percent by the end of the decade, making social work one of the fastest growing professions in the nation, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Social workers have been an integral part of our nation for decades. Social workers played key roles in the Civil Rights and Women's Rights movements and pushed for social programs we now take for granted, including the minimum wage, a 40-hour work week, Social Security and Medicare.

The time is always right for social work. However more people are entering the field because the life-affirming services that social workers provide are needed more than ever.

This is especially true as our nation continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, economic inequality, global warming, and other crises. **That is why the theme for Social Work Month 2022 is The Time is Right for Social Work.**

ABOUT SOCIAL WORKERS

There are more than 700,000 professional social workers employed in the United States, and more than three million worldwide. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to identify social work as one of the fastest growing professions in the United

States. Other government sources report there are more clinically trained social workers providing mental health and behavioral health services than any other professional discipline in the nation.

The nation needs more social workers as it continues to deal with entrenched problems that have stressed our society, including systemic racism and the Coronavirus pandemic. The United States is also experiencing one of its worst economic downturns since the Great Depression. Social workers are on the front lines, helping people overcome these crises.

In fact, social workers are everywhere people need help navigating tough life challenges. They contribute to interdisciplinary care teams in schools, hospitals, mental health centers, nonprofits, corporations, the military—and in local, state, and federal government. Many social work professionals also own private consultation practices.

Throughout U.S. history, social workers have:

- » Fought for civil and voting rights for people of color
- » Protested American intervention in wars
- » Achieved the minimum wage and safer workplaces for poor people
- » Expanded reproductive and employment rights for American women
- » Supported marriage and employment protections for LGBT people
- » Advocated for immigrants seeking asylum

- » Pushed for sensible gun laws and anti-violence initiatives
- » Raised awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment
- » Fought for client privacy and mental health services

ADDITIONAL CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND:

The social work profession has existed for more than a century. It attracts people who have a strong desire to help individuals, families, communities, and our nation overcome issues that prevent them from reaching their full potential.

These social workers help in myriad ways.

- » Are you a student who needs athletic shoes to participate in sports, but your parents can't afford to buy them? Talk to your school social worker. They can help you find the resources you need.
- » Do you want a better relationship with your spouse, children, or parents? Talk to a social worker. They can help you find a way to make your connections with other stronger.
- » Are you suffering from depression, anxiety, or a substance-use disorder? A social worker can give you strategies and guidance to surmount mental illness and addiction. Most therapists are social workers.
- » Are there no playgrounds or healthy food choices in your community and you want a positive change? Social workers can help you organize and make your voices heard in local, state, and federal government.
- » Do you think a child or older adult is suffering from abuse or neglect? Or are you interest in growing your family through foster care and adoption? There are social workers ready to help.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

This year's campaign will educate the public about the amazing work that social workers do and demonstrate why **The Time is Right for Social Work**.

- » **Online Quiz.** How much do you know about social work? Share a quiz to educate people about some of the many contributions of the profession.
- » **Celebrity Cameos.** Watch video messages about the value of social workers from celebrities, including actors and athletes.
- » **Ask a Social Worker.** Do you have a relationship or other issue and need help? Social workers can offer advice. Look for the Ask a Social Worker column on the Help Starts Here website.
- » **Social Media Campaign.** NASW will provide social media messaging to help you celebrate the month.
- » **Draft Press Release and Draft Letter to the Editor.** Use the release and letters to the editor to inform your local media about Social Work Month.
- » **Proclamations.** The Social Work Month online toolkit will also include a sample proclamation that social workers can send to city, local or state government officials. The proclamation will include information on the contributions of social work and why the social work title is so valued.
- » **Radio Tour.** NASW CEO Angelo McClain and NASW President Mit Joyner will do a nationwide radio tour to discuss how social workers are helping address issues of the day.
- » **Logos.** NASW will offer logos the public can use on Social Work Month promotional materials.
- » **Merchandise.** Social Work Month merchandise will be used to promote the **Time is Right for Social Work** theme. Jim Coleman LTD is our official vendor.

For more information on the 2022 Social Work Month "The Time is Right for Social Work" Campaign contact NASW Communications Director Greg Wright at gwright.nasw@socialworkers.org.