



**LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET:
EXPANDED CAPACITY FOR MASTERS OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW) STUDENTS IN
CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS**

Summary

This proposal would increase the number of Masters of Social Work (MSW) students to meet the growing demand for social workers who support children, youth, families and adults across various State-funded programs.

Background

MSW-level social workers are critical staff for delivering services across many diverse sectors and programs that impact virtually every Californian. MSW-level staff are especially critical in serving individuals and families impacted by poverty, abuse/neglect and behavioral health needs. This includes many publicly-funded programs including in child welfare, foster care, adult protective services, mental health, education, hospitals and school-based settings. MSW social workers also guide the work of many para-professional staff in team-based approaches.

Recent Investments for housing/homelessness, behavioral health, education and the child welfare and adult protective service systems have increased demand for MSW-trained social work staff across public agencies and community-based service providers.

Problem

Despite the above, there are simply too few social workers coming down the pipeline, because of the insufficient number of MSWs graduating each year. The Schools of Social Work do not have the internal capacity to add additional cohorts of students who desire to serve as social workers. Many social work programs do not have the capacity to meet the demand for social

work degree opportunities. For example, for the past 8 years, California State University, Long Beach, receives on average 1,200 applications

to their MSW program, but they can only accommodate 250 students. Because of the limited number of MSW degrees being offered, there is fierce competition across government and non-governmental agencies for MSWs. This often puts community-based organizations in the most difficult situation as they have fewer resources to offer competitive salaries and benefits.

Additionally, the pipeline does not have the capacity to continuously engage and sustain students who represent marginalized communities, such as individuals of color and those living with disabilities. California's population continues to become more diverse and the populations served by health and human service agencies are disproportionately represented by people of color. Consumers of our services continuously express a desire to be served by social workers who reflect the populations served

Solution

- Require the Secretary of Health and Human Services Agency (CHHSA) and representatives of the Chancellors of the UC and CSU Systems to convene a taskforce to develop and implement recommendations for expanding Masters of Social Work capacity in California's CSU and UC systems.
- Pending the completion and Implementation of the Taskforce's recommendations, establish a grant program of \$60 million in State General Funding to be used as seed funding to provide grants to schools of social work to immediately expand MSW slots, supports to community-based non-profit organizations offering field internships, and educational stipends to MSW students from under-represented communities.

- Require the CHHSA to commission a follow up study to the SB 2030 (Chapter 785, Statutes of 1998) child welfare workload study given the significant new mandates that have been enacted in recent years.

Co-Sponsors:

National Association of Social Workers-CA Chapter
(NASW-CA)
County Welfare Directors Association of CA (CWDA)