

NEWS RELEASE

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The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter (NASW-CA) Statement on the 2022-23 Proposed State Budget

The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter (NASW-CA), a professional association for social workers with a degree from an accredited school of social work, released a statement this morning on the 2022-23 Proposed State Budget:

NASW-CA would like to thank the Governor for his state budget proposal which makes critical investments in low-income, underrepresented, and vulnerable communities. In particular, we would like to highlight the Governor's recognition of the social work profession. As part of his budget, he highlighted several proposals to increase and invest in the social work workforce. The proposed budget included a major investment for the health and human services workforce for social workers, behavioral health care providers, including Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs), nurses, emergency medical technicians, and community health care workers. This proposal is highlighted as being necessary to meet the critical need for healthcare workers and to support economic growth.

“Unfortunately, the critical and quite frankly lifesaving work accomplished by social workers is often not recognized in the media nor by government officials,” stated Deborah Son, Executive Director of NASW-CA. “This budget illustrates the Governor's understanding that social workers play a central role for communities to access just and meaningful services and recognizes the importance of resourcing the social work profession so that we can succeed. Social Workers are the largest group of behavioral health providers in the United States and serve in diverse settings, including schools, justice systems, outpatient clinics, acute care hospitals, eldercare services, housing supports, skilled nursing facilities, the military, disaster relief, corporations, and in political office. In order to have a society that can thrive, you need social workers to be advocates, clinicians, and our social justice champions across these systems,” explained Son.

The proposed budget specifically included \$210 million in General Fund dollars for social work training, which includes stipends and scholarships for social work students. The Governor recognized that many students, especially from underrepresented populations, are unable to attend college full-time or afford the exorbitant costs of higher education, so these scholarships and stipends will be geared toward helping students complete their education in a timely manner. This allocation also honors the value of integrating lived experience and lifting up community expertise in the social work field. NASW-CA is a strong proponent of diversification of our workforce, and the Governor's



budget allows the state to consider specific strategies that breakdown the barriers of marginalized communities accessing quality higher education.

The Governor also focused on training programs by allocating \$90 million to the Healthcare Workforce Advancement Fund. This fund will be used to support job entry and career advancement for entry level workers in health and human services settings. The Governor specifically set aside \$40 million of the \$90 million for social worker training.

Lastly, social workers were included in a \$60 million General Fund investment for multilingual job applicants. This money would expand scholarships and loan repayment for healthcare and social workers. This will help to support a diverse and multilingual workforce that will reflect the population of the state and provide culturally responsive services.

Of note, the budget made investments in education, public safety, homeless and housing programs, senior services, and child welfare. All of these systems are supported and often led by the social work field.

NASW-CA appreciates the thoughtful commitment of Governor Newsom and his administration and looks forward to the ongoing collaboration to work to broaden the capacity of the social work profession and strengthen its transformative and positive change to enhance equity across all systems of care.

The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter represents approximately 9,000 professional social workers in California who have degrees from accredited social work programs across the country. NASW-CA advocates, on behalf of our members and their clients, for the implementation and improvement of programs and policies designed to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people.