

CONNECTIONS

October—December 2023



“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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America's Housing Crisis: Rising Infection Rates & the Struggle to Make Ends Meet

Cheryl Wilson, LCSW, MBA
President, Connecticut Chapter

The United States is facing an unprecedented housing crisis that continues to affect millions of its citizens. This crisis, fueled by a combination of rising infection rates and the relentless pursuit of full-time jobs, has created a perfect storm of challenges for American families.

The Housing Crisis

Before we dive into the impact of infection rates and full-time employment, it's crucial to understand the scope of the housing crisis. For years, housing costs have been on the rise, outpacing wage growth in many parts of the country. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 10 million Americans spend more than 50% of their income on housing, making them severely cost-burdened. This leaves little room for unexpected expenses, such as medical bills or emergencies.

Infection Rates on the Rise

The ongoing pandemic has further exacerbated the housing crisis. Infection rates have seen fluctuating waves, pushing many individuals and families into precarious situations. Health concerns and the risk of spreading the virus have made it difficult for people to move or find suitable

housing, particularly in crowded urban areas. Moreover, the pandemic has left some without a stable income due to job losses and business closures, making it challenging to afford rent or mortgage payments. For those fortunate enough to retain their jobs, the risk of infection in shared housing or public transportation remains a constant worry.

Full-Time Employment Doesn't Guarantee Stability

Working full-time used to be synonymous with financial stability, but for many Americans, this no longer holds true. The rising cost of living, coupled with stagnant wages in many industries, has left even those with full-time jobs struggling to make ends meet. Many find themselves caught in the cycle of living paycheck to paycheck, unable to save or invest in their future.

Possible Solutions

Addressing the housing crisis and its intersection with infection rates and employment stability requires a multi-faceted approach:

1. **Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Governments at all levels must invest in affordable housing

Injustice, continued

projects to ensure that everyone has access to safe and affordable homes.

2. **Raising the Minimum Wage:** Increasing the minimum wage can help lift many working Americans out of poverty and reduce their reliance on social safety nets.
3. **Healthcare Access:** Improving healthcare access and coverage can alleviate the burden of medical bills, reducing the risk of financial instability.
4. **Remote Work Opportunities:** Expanding remote work options can provide more flexibility for individuals and families to find affordable housing outside of crowded urban areas.

Conclusion

The intersection of the housing crisis, rising infection rates, and full-time employment challenges is a stark reminder of the need for comprehensive and compassionate policies. As we move forward, it's imperative that we prioritize the well-being of all Americans, ensuring that access to safe and affordable housing remains a fundamental right, not a privilege.

We must remember that the true strength of a nation lies in the well-being of its people. Together, we can work towards a future where housing is secure, infections are controlled, and full-time jobs provide not just income but also stability and hope.

Meet the Chapter's New Intern

Hello! My name is Isabel Alvarez-Diaz, I'm currently in my last year of my dual-degree program MSW/MA in Social Work and Women's Studies. I'm a 2021 graduate of University of Connecticut (UConn), where I double majored in Human Development and Family Sciences and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. During my time as an undergraduate, I worked in the Women's Center where I was one of two facilitators for a victim-survivor group of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking. My co-facilitator, Sara, at the time was applying to social work graduate schools and while discussing my plans after graduation, she encouraged me to look into social work. With her help, I was able to identify my determination for systemic change through policy, community organizing, and

research. I stumbled upon SCSU's MSW/MA Community Organizing with Women's Studies and applied.



From walking across that stage to walking into another classroom, I went straight from undergrad to graduate school and have not regretting my decision. I have always been and continue to be a student, thankful for the opportunities and experiences this MSW/MA program has offered me. I had the pleasure of acquiring conscious rising literature, attending lobby day, testifying for bills, conducting research, analyzing data, and much more. I'm excited to absorb as much as I can here and look forward to the experiences and opportunities within this internship.

Municipal Elections Offer Opportunity to Talk-Up Social Work

Steve Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW
Executive Director
Connecticut Chapter



As local candidates knock on your door, meet voters at community events, and have a visible presence in the community, this is the perfect time to educate candidates on the importance and value of having social workers in local government positions. Local candidates are seeking conversation and connection to you, a voter. I say, give them a conversation they likely will not expect; why your community needs professional social workers enhancing your city or town services. One thing about unexpected conversations, they tend to be remembered.

In the ongoing pandemic, municipalities need professional social workers who, as essential workers, are trained to deliver the highest quality service. Studies that date back to 1988, (Booz Allen & Hamilton, *The Maryland social work services job analysis and personnel qualifications study*), found that social workers with a Master (MSW) or Bachelor (BSW) degree in social work outperformed other workers without the social work degree. Subsequent studies have similar findings. At a time when municipalities continue to deal with Covid-19, giving **preference** to candidates with a social work degree is the best way to assure a highly qualified workforce.

In 2014 the State of Connecticut, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) instituted preference in hiring of MSWs and BSWs for all executive branch departments for the job classification of social

worker. In 2019 that preference in hiring of MSWs and BSWs became codified into state law. The reason for this is that after 7 years of employment experience, the State of Connecticut determined that employing professional social workers led to better delivery of social services, a more qualified workforce and improved client outcomes. Localities may not always want to hear what the state has done, but given this success it is a good starting point to a discussion on city/town hiring practices.

Settings such as social/human service departments, public schools, libraries, senior centers & senior services, youth bureaus and law enforcement are all municipal departments where professional social workers can make a significant contribution and where MSWs and BSWs belong. The key reasons that professional social workers should be the preferred candidate of choice for municipalities when hiring for social service positions is as follows:

- Professional social workers must complete a rigorous curriculum that includes core competencies determined by the national Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in order to earn a BSW or MSW degree. Social workers are educated in a 'person in environment' approach that assures the most holistic and comprehensive methods to working with clients. This unique perspective helps social workers to assist people in reaching their full potential, while contributing to building healthy

Opportunity, continued

and productive families and communities. Social workers have specific skills and knowledge in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that grounds the social worker in a much broader understanding of client needs than an individual with a related degree brings to the job. Professional social workers utilize a systems perspective that fully account for the person's individual situation, the client's family relationships, the social determinants that impact on the presenting issues and the community resources that can be brought to bear to the problems at hand.

- Attaining a degree in social work requires completion of a comprehensive curriculum that is approved by CSWE. Completion of the internship give social workers real life experience prior to entering the field as a practitioner.
- Professional social workers abide by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics that grounds the social worker in ethical standards of practice.
- Most MSWs have attained professional licensure by passage of a nationally recognized exam.

There are many municipal settings where professional social workers can provide quality services. The most obvious is a Social Service or Human Services Department where residents bring a host of concerns. Through case management, assessment and intervention, knowledge of community services and advocacy MSWs and BSWs excel at such service delivery. Professional social workers are also collaborative practitioners who know how to coordinate with other municipal departments to maximize successful service delivery.

School social workers provide a range of services, including crisis intervention, counseling, behavior modification, mental health, work with families,

and support for teachers and administrators. The tsunami of mental health needs in our schools speaks to the importance of having school social workers in each school.

Libraries are an area of growing employment for social workers. Public libraries serve a wide range of residents' needs that include encounters with persons who are homeless, have mental health illnesses, are unemployed, have unmet health care needs, face family caregiving issues and isolation. Libraries are successfully employing social workers to engage their patrons. In the U.S. House of Representatives there is a bill; *MSWs In Libraries Act (H.R. 3006)* that you can support today <https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Alerts>

Senior services and senior centers are excellent settings for professional social workers to work in. Senior centers have evolved into comprehensive service centers where staff must understand issues of mental health, health care, community resources, case management and programmatic services appropriate for all ages of seniors. Professional social workers meet all these criteria and more!

Youth bureaus deliver clinical services to children and adolescents, working on mental health needs and family issues. Licensed clinical social workers are recognized by all major insurers so can provide billable services to offset service delivery costs.

Local police departments have begun to recognize the value of having a social worker as part of the department's personnel. Often police are called in to deal with persons with mental illness, homelessness, and domestic disturbances. In such cases having a social worker to accompany the law enforcement officer can lead to better and safer outcomes for both the person in need and the responding officer. There is a growing movement of police departments in CT who utilize social workers. Ask the candidates if your town has law enforcement social workers, and if not, why?

Opportunities, continued

Candidates may have heard there is a shortage of social workers, however Connecticut has an ample pool of MSWs and BSWs who are well suited for municipal employment. There are 6 MSW schools and 8 BSW schools in Connecticut and many more in surrounding states that offer municipalities a strong pool of candidates to recruit from.

Municipalities are excellent places for MSWs and BSWs to be employed. As a municipality the social worker sees a diversity of residents in age, economic status, and social needs. The social work degree best prepares the employee to address this wide range of issues. Employing social workers

assures the municipality has responsive employees that will advocate to improve the lives of its residents.

Over three years ago NASW/CT launched a campaign to have municipalities institute **preference in hiring of MSWs and BSWs**. Preference is not a mandate. It simply means that when recruiting and hiring of employees those candidates with the social work degree are given first consideration. The 2023 local elections are a perfect time for you to present our profession's case directly to those seeking elected positions.



Advertisement



The Toby Center
For Family Transitions

The Toby Center is a nonprofit child and family reunification agency expanding our court ordered supervised visitation and therapeutic services in Connecticut after a successful track record of service to community-based care and foster care agencies in more than 20 counties in Florida. With locations in New London and Southbury, we welcome referrals and interests in joining us as an independent contractor.

Our value proposition is found in a) our commitment to accommodate both the custodial and non custodial parties; and b) our determination to provide everyone needing these professional services with affordable options since health insurance will not yet cover the expenses.

Please visit our website for more details at <https://www.thetobycenter.org/>!

Chapter Calls for Updating Nursing Home Social Work Regulations

The state regulations for nursing home social work are outdated going back at least 30 years. This summer the Department of Public Health held a hearing on proposed revisions to the regulations in regards to staffing levels, including social work. The social work staffing ratios have been greatly improved from 120 beds to 1 social worker to 60 beds to 1 social worker. The hearing incorporated this change into the new proposed regulations and NASW/CT testified in support.

The Chapter took this opportunity to urge DPH to go further by eliminating old language as to who may practice social work in a nursing home. Current practice requires a BSW or MSW degree with at least one year of health care experience. The regulations however have old language, including allowing persons without a social work degree to be a nursing home social work designee with MSW consultation. This provision applied to social work designees employed prior to January 1, 1989.

The definition of a Qualified Social Worker includes *"An individual who has a bachelor's degree in a field other than social work and a certificate in Post Baccalaureate Studies in Social Work awarded before the effective date of these regulations by a college accredited by the Department of Higher Education, and at least one year social work experience in a health facility, may perform the duties and carry out the responsibilities of a qualified social worker for up to three years after the effective date of these regulations"*. The problem here is twofold; it references persons without a social work degree who held a certificate

in social work, a certificate which has never existed, and it only applies to persons who received this non-existent certificate over 30 years ago. Here again, NASW/CT called on DPH to eliminate this outdated, inaccurate, and confusing language.

Finally, we called on DPH to eliminate the section on Qualified Social Work Consultant since these consultants were for non-social work trained persons performing nursing home social work. Now that only BSWs and MSWs can practice nursing home social work we see no reason to maintain the social work consultant definition in the regulations.

DPH in response to NASW/CTs testimony on social work agreed with the Chapter's recommendations, however the Department's position is that they can only revise the regulations in relation to staffing as only that was mandated by legislation. DPH stated their intention to update the regulations at a future date when the regulations are reviewed.

Given the regulations for social work are over 30 years old, NASW/CT has concern that revising the regulations may not occur for years. The Chapter has enlisted the support of Representative Jane Garibay, co-chair of the Aging Committee to have legislative language raised in 2024 either stating that a BSW or MSW degree and one year of health care experience is required to be employed as a nursing home social worker, or a bill directing DPH to revise and update the state regulations. Either one will make clear that a social work degree is required. The next legislative session begins in February, 2024.

CALL UPON THE GOVERNOR TO LOWER LCSW RENEWAL FEE

The Legislature lowered the licensing fees for LMSWs and LCSW application but raised the fee for the LCSW renewal. CT already had the highest annualized licensing fees in the nation, and now they are even higher for LCSWs. To address this we are asking Governor Lamont to reduce the LCSW renewal fee in his proposed biennial budget adjustments bill.

Tell Governor Lamont that when he develops his upcoming budget proposal that he needs to make the LCSW renewal fee competitive with all the surrounding states. NASW/CT has sent the Governor a list of all New England and Mid-Atlantic states renewal fees on an annualized basis. CT has the highest fees of any of these states. Tell the Governor that what has been done to help LMSWs needs to now be applied to LCSWs. Tell the Governor to propose the same \$125 annual renewal fee that LMSWs pay.

TALKING POINTS

- Every other jurisdiction in the nation has a lower clinical license renewal fee. CT needs to be more competitive.
- CT is one of only 7 states that have an annual renewal. Most states are every 2 years.
- LCSWs are the mainstay of mental health services and need the same support given to LMSWs.
- Since the LMSW came into existence nearly a decade ago the LCSW & LMSW renewal fee was the same. There is precedence for an equal fee.
- On an annual fee basis MA costs \$41, RI costs \$50 and NY costs \$74.66. CT costs \$200!
- High license fees discourage recruitment and retention of LCSWs.
- The state's largest business association, CBIA, supports lower license fees.

Contact Governor Lamont Now

Call the Governor's Office at 800-406-1527 or 860-524-7397.

Email the Governor using the email contact form <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/Contact/Email-Governor-Lamont>

Say you are a social worker. Mention one or more of the above talking points (or your own reason for seeking a lower fee).

Ask that his proposed budget adjustments for next year include reducing the LCSW license renewal fee from the nation's highest \$200 to \$125.

If you receive any feedback, please let us know by emailing skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org

Feel free to share this alert with your social work colleagues.

Committee Welcomes New Members



**The NASW/CT's
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Welcomes New Members!**

**Our Committee welcomes new members, both current
NASW/CT members and those who have yet to join,
to our upcoming meetings.**

**Join us on the first Wednesday evenings of the month
on Zoom to network with social workers with diverse
experiences and backgrounds, discuss current events, and
brainstorm ideas to bring diversity, equity, and inclusion to
social workers in CT and beyond!**

**Email co-chairs Meghan Lauer (Lauer@my.ccsu.edu)
and Sherryl Chin (Sgchin09@gmail.com) for Zoom
and/or additional information.**

Updated 9/12/2023

NASW/CT PACE Endorses Seven Social Workers for Municipal Election

CT PACE, the political action committee of NASW/CT is pleased to announce the endorsement of seven NASW members running in local elections. CT PACE only endorses in municipal elections when there is a social worker running. NASW membership is not required for endorsement, however we are happy to report that all seven endorsed candidates are NASW/CT members! Here are our candidates.

Kathleen Callahan is running for the second time for a seat on the Stratford Town Council. Kathleen is a member of the Chapter's legislative committee (past co-chair) and former member of the CT PACE Trustees. She is also the chair of the Stratford Democratic Town Committee and deputized as a Registrar of Voters. Kathleen seeks to build a responsive, transparent local government that functions properly and efficiently for all residents. Kathleen has a consulting business.

Lamond Daniels is seeking to become the first social worker elected as Mayor of Bridgeport. Daniels has served as a government executive in both Bridgeport and Norwalk, and has extensive experience in the philanthropic and nonprofit services sector. He has pledged to lead the city with more transparency, integrity, and honesty, which is vital for addressing Bridgeport's longstanding issues such as safer neighborhoods, lack of affordable housing, job creation, and quality of life. Lamond is running as a petitioning candidate on the ballot.

Darlene Klase is running for the Windsor Town Council. Darlene is currently serving on the Windsor Board of Education and is former chair of the Windsor Democratic Town Committee. Her focus, if elected, will include investment in public schools, managing property revaluation and community health and safety. Darlene is employed by the UCONN School of Social Work and manages a training and organizational contract at the CT Department of Social Services.

William (Bill) Knoegel is a candidate for the Southington Planning and Zoning Commission. He is co-chair of the Chapter's legislative committee, Treasurer of CT PACE and serves on the Southington Conservation Land Trust. Bill is retired after 42 years of practice that included both state and private sector employment in a variety of settings. Bill is running to emphasize improved development decisions, to bring greater emphasis on climate change and balancing of residential and commercial building.

Shannon Lane is running for the second time for election to the Bethany Board of Education. Shannon is a social work educator since 2008, teaching primarily policy, research, and community practice. Shannon holds an appointed position as the Deputy Registrar of Voters. Shannon is running to become part of the team that finds solutions to Bethany school's challenges.

Flora Lazer is a candidate for Salisbury representative to the Regional Board of Education that governs the regional high school and related social services. Flora has deep experience at the intersection of social change, social research, and clinical work. She seeks to advocate for enhanced mental health services and to ensure that all students are provided with an education that offers meaningful academic and non-academic choices. Flora has a private practice working with children and adults.

Mitchell Page is running for re-election to the Newington Town Council. His work on the Council has had a focus on protecting the environment, supporting vulnerable populations, supporting public schools and homelessness. Mitch is a clinical social worker with a private practice.

Member in the News

Dr. Jerry Streets, LCSW has been appointed to the new position of coordinator of the Yale University Joint Degree Program in Divinity and Social Work. Dr. Streets is a licensed clinical social worker with a distinguished career in social work, theological education, and ministry. This dual degree program is partly the result of a state initiative, CT Health Horizons to expand the enrollment and graduation of social workers and nurses. In announcing the appointment, Dean Greg Sterling of Yale Divinity School wrote "It is impossible to imagine someone more qualified for this role and better positioned to support YDS students who wish to pursue this potent degree that we offer in partnership with the University of Connecticut."

Kim Shepardson Watson, LCSW has been appointed to the newly forming *Advisory Committee To The Office Of The Behavioral Health*

Advocate. This advisory board will assist in the selection of the Advocate and advise the Behavioral Health Advocate on Office's work. Kim was appointed by Representative Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader. His appointment assures that at least one clinical social worker will be part of the Advisory Board.

Feddak Zaidi, MSW candidate has been appointed to the position of MSW Student Representative to the NASW/CT Board of Directors. Feddak is a MSW student at the UCONN School of Social Work, with a concentration in Individuals, Groups and Families.

Have news you want to share? Submit your listing to info.naswct@socialworkers.org and put Members in News for the subject line.

2023 NASW/CT Annual Award Honorees

Congratulations to the NASW/CT Annual Awards Honorees! Thank you to all who came out and supported these deserving individuals on October 18th. It was wonderful to have everyone together celebrating the great profession of social work. From left to right, they are:

Nebiyou Masresha
MSW STUDENT OF THE YEAR

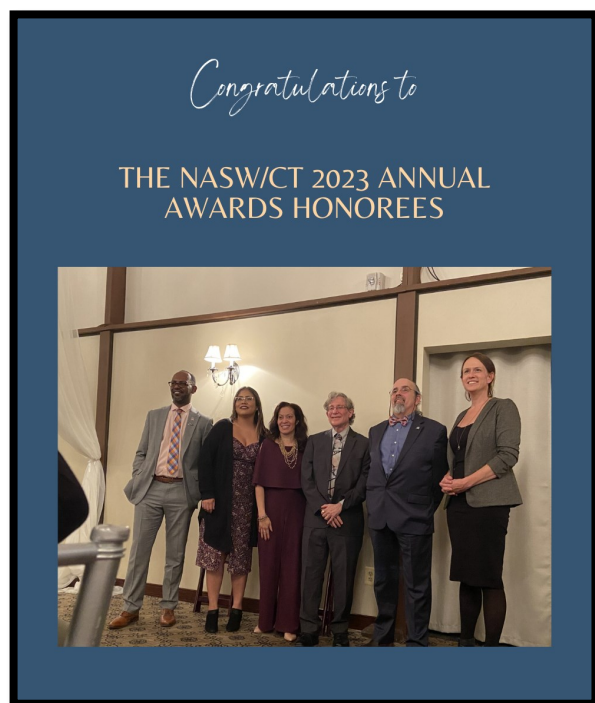
Yajaira Olvera
BSW STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Isabel Logan, Ed.D., LCSW
SOCIAL WORKER OF THE YEAR

Stephen A. Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Stephen Monroe Tomczak, PhD, LMSW
EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Representative Jillian Gilcrest
LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR



Connecticut Paid Leave



CT Paid Leave (CTPL) is a state program that provides financial relief to Connecticut families by allowing individuals to care for a loved one or themselves without worrying about lost income.

HOW DOES PAID LEAVE WORK?



Employees contribute one-half of 1% (0.5%) of their pay, which is deducted from their paycheck by their employers. When workers need paid leave benefits, the CT Paid Leave Authority manages the process.

WHY CAN I TAKE PAID LEAVE?



- Caring for your own or a loved one's health condition
- Growing your family through adoption, birth or foster care
- Addressing issues arising from family violence
- Caring for a family member injured during active duty or for military exigency leave

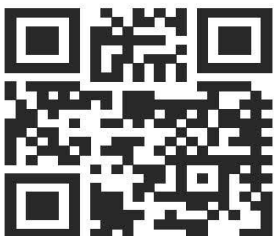
HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ELIGIBLE?



You are eligible for CTPL if:

- You meet CTPL's minimum earning requirements
- You are or were employed by a covered employer in the past 12 weeks
- If you work for more than one covered employer, your wages can be combined
- Wages may include salary, vacation pay, holiday pay, tips, commissions and severance

Scan the QR to learn more



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Call for Proposals Now Open!

NASW/CT 37th Annual Statewide Conference

May 31, 2024

Mystic Marriott

Call For Proposals

NASW/CT is now accepting papers for its 37th Annual Statewide Conference to be held on May 31, 2024 at the Mystic Marriott in Mystic, CT. In this unique profession of ours, we strive to help people in all stages and walks of life. The professional social worker needs to acquire knowledge in numerous arenas including prevention, treatment, direct service, private practice, social policy, cultural competency, administration, community organization, and legislation.

The conference committee is seeking proposals that explore topics in varying fields of social work practice and at all levels (micro, mezzo, or macro). The workshop presentations should appeal to experienced social workers and others in allied fields.

Guidelines for Proposals

The committee recommends that one of the presenters has a BSW or MSW degree or be a social work student but this is not required for a proposal to be accepted. To make the presentation informative and rewarding for the Conference audience, the committee suggests that presenters plan to address their remarks to professionals with **intermediate** or **advanced levels** of experience and knowledge. Social Workers appreciate specific “how to” comments and relevant examples. Please do not plan to read a power point or only lecture as our participants prefer interactive programs.

Submit a copy of the Proposal which includes a description of your professional experience, the Abstract, and the Brief Summary Abstract by **December 22, 2023**. We request that you include your objectives in the Abstract as well as a few sentences regarding how the presentation incorporates social work values.

NOTE: No Personal Identification should appear in the Abstract to provide anonymity in the decision making process. The Proposal form can be obtained from the NASW office or the form can be downloaded from the website at www.naswct.org **Presenters attend the Annual Conference at no charge but they are asked to pay \$40 if they are joining us for lunch.**

No additional presenters may be added after the Proposal is accepted. We ask that you limit your presenters to 5 should you be planning a panel.

Conference Committee decisions and notifications will be sent mid-January 2024.

Send Proposals to NASW/CT Annual Conference Committee 2139 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 205, Rocky Hill, CT 06067 Or Email to pnixon.naswct@socialworkers.org

Any questions, please call Pamela Nixon at 860-371-8183

Go to www.naswct.org and scroll down to the Special Events box for the form.

2024 Recommendations on Workforce Support for Social Workers

The National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter offers the following recommendations to address the workforce needs of the current social work workforce. The pandemic has put a severe strain on social workers who face increased client needs while also dealing with their own impacts of Covid-19. A December 2022 survey by NASW/CT of 320 members found that 57% faced increased stressors at work since the start of the pandemic. The past two legislative sessions dealt with issues that will assist individuals seeking to enter the field of social work, however, supports for the current clinical workforce remain largely unaddressed. Licensed Social Workers are the largest profession providing mental health and social services to our state's residents and are in critical need of support for their work.

Not all our recommendations have legislative solutions. Some require action by employers and insurers; however, policy leaders can spotlight the needs and bring public pressure to those ideas that are not within their direct purview. Some of our ideas are carry-overs from 2023 while others are newly developed recommendations. All the following are, in the view of NASW/CT, necessary to preserve and retain the state's social work workforce.

- **Lower the LCSW licensure renewal fee:** On an annualized basis, CT has by far the highest clinical social work licensure renewal fee of any jurisdiction in the nation. We are also one of only seven states that have an annual renewal. The 2023 Legislature reduced the licensure fees for Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and the application fee for the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). At the same time the LCSW fee, already the highest in the nation, was increased. We call for reducing the LCSW renewal fee to \$125 annually to match the LMSW renewal fee. Both fees were the same until July 2023, so precedence exists for returning to equal fees. This will make Connecticut more competitive with all New England and Mid-Atlantic states.
- **Increased Salary and Reimbursement Rates:** Social work is largely a women's field. Women get paid less than men. We call on the legislature to increase funding that is dedicated for increased social work salaries in the non-profit sector. Private sector compensation should have equity with State of Connecticut social work compensation in the social worker and clinical social worker state classifications. Likewise, insurers must increase reimbursement rates. Increasingly, clinical social workers are leaving insurance panels for private pay only that is causing an inequity between those who can afford private pay and those who cannot. Insurance rates go up each year, with most insurers having gotten high single to double digits increases approved for 2024. It is absolutely time reimbursement rates rose too.
- **Place a one-year limitation on retroactive denial of insurance payments (claw backs):** CT statute allows up to five years for insurers to retroactively take back prior approved payment. This problem annually affects about 45% of clinical social workers in private practice. It has become one of the primary reasons for behavioral health clinicians dropping insurance in favor of private pay only. This creates a serious equity issue between those who can afford to pay privately for care and those who must use their insurance coverage (for which they pay premiums).
- **Clarify qualifications for nursing home social work:** State regulations on who can perform nursing home social work are woefully outdated and lacking in clarity. NASW/CT calls for statutory language to clarify that a BSW or MSW degree from a Council on Social Work Education accredited program and one year of health care experience is required to be employed as a nursing home social worker.
- **Funding municipal libraries to employ social workers:** Library patrons often include unemployed or underemployed persons, those who lack permanent housing, persons with

Workforce Support, continued

behavioral health needs, substance users and other social and health care needs. Library social workers provide services such as casework, information and referral, behavioral health & health groups, staff consultation and community education. Massachusetts has a vibrant library social work program in many town & city libraries. CT needs to create a grant program to assist municipal libraries with the costs of employing social workers.

- **Pilot grant program for licensed social workers to provide consultation to homeless shelters:** Shelter staff often deal with residents who have mental health and substance use problems. Such staff rarely have expertise in addressing such issues. We call for a pilot grant program administered through the Department of Housing to assist shelters in affording to contract with licensed clinical social workers for staff consultation and resident assessment.
- **Municipal settings and schools:** Expand the utilization of social workers by city and town departments such as senior and youth services, police, welfare department and schools. For school systems, each school should have at least one school social worker, at the NASW endorsed ratio of 1 school social worker per 250 students.
- **Longevity Bonuses:** Many employers now offer sign on bonuses to attract applicants. But how about the current employees? We call on employers to offer “**stay-on**” retention bonuses to those social workers who have been employed for five or more consecutive years.
- **Licensure Renewal Fees:** Employers should pay the license renewal fee of licensed social work employees where the license is required for the job.
- **Support for Providing LMSW Supervision:** CT has initiated the CT Health Horizons Program that will fund MSW schools of social work to expand faculty and increase graduation numbers. Most of those graduates will become LMSWs who must be under professional clinical supervision until such

time that they become an LCSW. The LCSWs who provide the supervision should be compensated for the added responsibility and an adjusted workload.

- **Build Clinical Career Paths:** Employers need to develop career paths for senior clinicians to advance in the organization and be paid at an enhanced salary comparable to management positions. Experienced clinicians should not feel they must move into supervisory or management jobs to improve their economic status.
- **Provide Funds and Release Time for Continuing Education:** Licensed social workers are required to attain 15 hours of continuing education per license year. Employers should offer reimbursement for completion of required continuing education and release time during work hours to attend relevant continuing education programs.
- **Tuition Reimbursement:** Offer BSW employees pursuing a MSW degree tuition reimbursement support in return for agreement to remain in the agency for a set time period after attaining the master degree.
- **Urgent Care Medical Centers:** Encourage Urgent Care medical centers to employ licensed clinical social workers to address patients who have mental health needs. Urgent care facilities are seeing patients with behavioral health concerns that the urgent care facility is not currently set up to serve. Having LCSW staff or contracts with LCSWs for referral would greatly assist the urgent care staff and the patients seeking mental health care.

For more information on these recommendations contact Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW, Executive Director, NASW/CT at skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org or 860-212-4054.

Lifetime Achievement Award Acceptance Speech

When I first found out I was selected for this award and read the nominating letters I teared up. This is an honor that I thank the Chapter for bestowing to me. I look at the names of those who have received the lifetime achievement award and they are social workers who I very much admire, individuals who I have reached out to for guidance and are amongst the finest social workers I have known. To be a part of this group is humbling and deeply appreciated.

When I was attaining my MSW degree, my community organizing professor had a slogan – SOLO IS DODO. One does not achieve success by themselves. My career successes are filled with the help, guidance, and support of others. I have many to thank, starting with my wife Rose-Ann who is my greatest source of support. It is not coincidental that much of my best work has come in the past nine years that Rosie and I have been together.

I thank the chapter presidents I have served with, all who I have learned from. Thank you to the current and past chapter board members, committee members and general membership that have given me the opportunity for the past 35 years to undertake the job of my dreams. And a special thank you to the staff who have always made me proud to be their boss.

I started my career as a BSW working for the City of New Haven's Elderly Outreach, a brand-

new program. My career then took me to nursing home social work, a MSW degree with an internship at NASW/CT, working as the first social worker for an agency running group homes for developmentally disabled adults. I spent over five years running senior centers for two towns. Throughout my early career I was an active volunteer with NASW/CT, both on committees and the board. I thought my entire career was going to be in the field of aging and disabilities.



It was in 1988 that I first became employed by NASW as the Political Organizing Director for NASW NYS, followed by 10 years as the CT executive director, two years as a senior manager at the National Office and back to CT NASW in 2001. In each case, I have undertaken building programs from scratch or expanding on existing programs. Early in my career I thought I would become bored if I stayed too long at one job, so 3.5 years was my record before the 35 years at NASW, where I found my home.

When I started with NASW/CT our state had the weakest legal regulation of social work in the nation. In my tenure we passed third party reimbursement, confidentiality of social work records, two license levels, continuing education requirements, title protection, inclusion of licensed social workers in LLCs, codifying state agency preference in hiring for BSWs and MSWs, inclusion of LCSWs in mental

Speech, continued

health assessments of police officers, and reduction of nursing home staff ratios from 120 beds/ 1 social worker to 60 beds/1 social worker. We took on local school boards to protect and expand school social work positions, and helped DMHAS to create a job classification for LMSWs. Every 2-3 years we stopped bills that would have limited the scope of practice of social workers. Nearly every state law related to social work has been enacted in my tenure. I have to say though that looking back on 32 years as Chapter Executive Director, my proudest accomplishment has been getting the State of CT to give preference in hiring to BSWs and MSWs for the position of social worker. It was 25 years, on and off effort, that has made such a huge difference for CTs residents served by state social service agencies. Whenever we can be at the intersection of professional advancement for social work and advancement of social justice that has been my most satisfying moments.

I have been able to work on issues of health care, managed care, mental health, civil rights, education, finance & revenue, to name just a few. Through CT PACE we have engaged in electoral politics that brings together social workers and candidates for electoral action. One of the beautiful things about NASW is that our social justice agenda has always been larger than our professional guild agenda. I believe we are the only professional association in CT that can say that! This Chapter is a powerhouse legislatively, often passing our bills the first time out. Legislators know they have social work constituents because NASW/CT uses community organizing skills and strategies to mobilize members. It has been the heart of my work. I can take credit for the strategy, but it is the countless social workers who made the

calls and sent the emails that are the reason for our successes.

At the same time, I have had the pleasure to work with members individually on a range of issues, matters and questions. When at the national office I had the opportunity to work with all 55 chapters. Over my career I have gained so much insight and knowledge from conversations with others, be they clients, family members of clients, co-workers, colleagues and of course members.

I cannot think of a better lifetime career than being a social worker. The opportunity to undertake casework, group work, community organizing, policy and administration all as integral parts of one profession is amazing. When I was a BSW I organized tenants in elderly housing. As a senior center director, I made sure that the center's members had a full voice in their center's programs and services. To be able to organize people to speak for themselves is at the core of our profession. Since 1988 to represent social workers, first throughout NY and then CT (with a quick break to represent chapters at the national office) is truly an honor. I have been blessed to be able to do this work and am not done yet! I am still committed to the unfinished work of lowering the LCSW license renewal fee! Having said that, I am close to completion of my NASW career with retirement at the end of next June.

The highest level of recognition is that from one's peers. Congratulations to all the awardees for their outstanding work. It is a pleasure to have shared this special evening with each of you. Thank you!

2023 Annual Awards Dinner Highlights

On October 18th, 2023, the NASW/CT Chapter honored six people who have contributed to the field of social work in different, but decidedly outstanding, ways. A crowd of 90 gathered at Farmington Gardens in Farmington, CT for conversation, dinner, and the presentation of the awards. As always, it was an inspiring and memorable evening.



The Chapter awarded Representative Jillian Gilchrestm NSW the Legislator of the Year Award. Presented by Melinda Longtin, LMSW, Co-Chair of the ELAN Committee. Representative Gilchrest has championed a number of important issues which have significantly supported and advanced the legislative

agenda of the NASW/CT. Her work this year includes a wide range of issues, including child marriage, legislation to eradicate sex trafficking with children and adolescents, temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), telehealth, children's mental health, HUSKY, aid in dying and ammunition taxation. NASW/CT recognizes Representative Gilchrest for her exemplary leadership in bringing critical issues to the attention of colleagues for the advancement of social work practice in Connecticut and was pleased to present her with the 2023 Legislator of the Year Award.



Yajaira Olvera was the recipient of the BSW Student of the Year and was introduced by Latoya Hinds, DSW, LCSW. As a May 2023 University of Saint Joseph graduate, Yajaira excelled academically and as a leader on campus. She

contributed greatly to student life at USJ as a cohort leader of Saturday students, many of whom were adult learners, who collectively shared their successes and struggles returning to college. She served as the glue in joining both Saturday students with the weekday students to create a larger social work community on campus. As a veteran, she was instrumental in helping to educate the USJ campus on how to best serve this special population. She is deeply committed to obtaining the training and skills necessary to become a socially conscious practitioner and NASW/CT was proud to name Yajaira the 2023 BSW Student of the Year.



Nebiyu Masresha received the MSW Student of the Year award and was introduced by Carol Awasu, PhD, MSW. He has excelled academically in the Quinnipiac program and his engagement in both field placements and the local community is impressive. Nebiyu has a strong background in advocacy, community engagement and

military service. As a veteran, he has been advocating for veterans for 10 years at both the state and federal level. As an intern with The Towers at Tower Lane, a senior living community in New Haven, Nebiyu developed a two-day Veteran's Day celebration to thank the veterans who live there for their service. The City of New Haven, State of Connecticut and Connecticut Department of Veteran's Affairs honored, five World War II Veterans and Nebiyu was able to secure Proclamations and Commendations from New Haven's Mayor, Justin Elicker and State Senator, Gary Winfield. Following an internship with Jewish Family Services in New Haven, he was asked to join their board of directors. He embodies the principal and values of the social work profession. NASW/CT is proud to name him the 2023 MSW Student of the Year.

Annual Awards, continued



Stephen Monroe Tomczak, PhD, LMSW was awarded this year's Educator of the Year and was introduced by Loida Reyes. Dr.

Tomczak is an exceptional educational leader who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to the profession of social work, his students and the community. Professor

Tomczak, or Zak as he is

commonly known amongst his colleagues and friends, has demonstrated exemplary leadership within the field in countless interesting and inspiring ways. His influence on the development and training of hundreds of social workers in Connecticut is unmatched.

As a professor at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) he teaches courses on social welfare policy, community practice, social planning and advocacy at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral level. He goes above and beyond for his students, lecturing and engaging in dialogue from the moment class starts until it ends, creating forums for creative and passionate discussions on social issues of the day. He is a wealth of knowledge about the profession and the historical underpinnings of Social Work. Zak is a creative educator, who thinks out of the box and beyond the classroom. His leadership has sustained the NASW Lobby Day Training and Social Work Lobby Day for many years, even during the Covid-19 pandemic. His leadership has brought together most schools of social work in Connecticut with partnership with NASW-CT in the creation and delivery of these events, and these experimental opportunities have introduced thousands of students to the legislative process in Connecticut. Zak holds himself accountable to the values he teaches through his advocacy and service and regularly supports local and statewide protests. This spring, he was voluntarily arrested as part of a social

action. He serves on the NASW-CT's Education and Legislative Action Network (ELAN) and is regularly engaged in legislative and political processes providing testimony every session of the Connecticut General Assembly.

Tomczak is a truly exceptional educational leader, whose impact begins in the classroom and vibrates across the university, community, state and national level. He is an engaged member of NASW-CT, and fully exemplifies our values of service and social justice. He is a first second generation awardee as his mother, Sally Tomczak, is a former NASW/CT Social Worker of the Year in 1993! NASW/CT is honored to present Dr. Tomczak with the 2023 NASW Educator of the Year award.



Isabel Logan, Ed.D, LCSW was awarded this year's Social Worker of the Year award and she was introduced by Robert Madden JD, LCSW. Dr. Logan is the executive director and co-founder of SWLE, the Social Work & Law Enforcement Project. It is the first-of-its-kind program that imbeds social work students into police

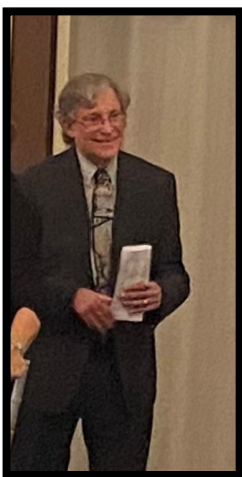
departments. Police social work is truly an emergent field and we owe its development in the state of Connecticut to Dr. Logan. SWLE was created after the passage of Connecticut's Public Act 20-1 "An Act Concerning Police Accountability" in July 2020. This legislation encourages police to use social workers on calls for assistance, especially after high profile incidents of police brutality.

SWLE began as a single BSW internship placement during the COVID epidemic and has not developed into a statewide collaboration including Willimantic, Milford, Norwich and Stamford police departments, as well as seven undergraduate and graduate students from five schools in two states. It is now a

Annual Awards, continued

national model. Dr. Logan has led the development of a curriculum for a first in the country Police Social Work Training Academy. The academy prepares the interns who will be placed in law enforcement settings and the police professionals who are preparing to be their task supervisors. It is also used to train newly hired social workers who are starting work in a police social work position.

SWLE has gained national attention and praise from U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. Dr. Logan and the SWLE have become the model for practice standards in police social work. She has created a statewide network to support interns and newly hired police social workers and has been instrumental in forming a national network to link those who are developing this field in multiple states across the country. As part of this work, Dr. Logan has presented at two National Conferences and is the first to author an article in the Journal of Social Work Education on the preparation of social workers for police social work. NASW/CT honors and celebrates Dr. Logan for her contributions and dedication to the profession of social work with the 2023 Social Worker of the Year Award.



Stephen A. Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW was honored with the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award presented by Pat Hartman. Steve has been a part of the social work profession and community in Connecticut since he entered the social work program at Southern Connecticut State University in 1975. In September of 1988 Steve solidified his commitment to the National Association of Social Workers by becoming the Director of Legislation and

Political Action for the New York State Chapter in Albany, NY and shortly thereafter, in 1989, he became the Executive Director of the Connecticut

Chapter of NASW. With a short stint in Washington, D.C., back in 1999 to 2001, he took on the job of NASW's National Director of Chapter Services and Continuing Education and Ethics, he has remained this state's executive director for a total of 32 years!

Over the years Steve has shared his time and expertise with many organizations (serving on so many boards it is impossible to list them all) including the CT Citizen Action Group, the CT Certification Board, the Office of Healthcare Advocate Advisory Board, the Newington Housing Authority, Keep the Promise, Money Follows the Person, CT Council of Mental Health Professionals, Healthcare for All, the New Britain Board of Welfare, and advisory boards for almost every school of social work in Connecticut. He taught community organization classes and social policy classes for Southern, Central, and Saint Joseph College, presented at many statewide and national conferences and contributed opinion editorials for several publications.

Since his early years as Director of the CT Chapter Steve has established and nurtured working relationships with many state coalitions focusing on advancing racial, economic, environmental, and social justice; protecting safety net services; expanding access to comprehensive medical and behavioral health care; and seeing to positive reform in policing, reproductive rights, housing, voting, and taxation. He has worked tirelessly over the years to mobilize chapter members and activate networks to lobby for change, not only to improve our communities but to protect and strengthen the profession of social work. Each step of the way has built respect between NASW and the state legislature culminating in the passage of such critical legislation as Third-Party Reimbursement, the Social Work Confidentiality Statute, and the LCSW bill in 1995 and the LMSW bill in 2010. During Steve's tenure and under his guidance, LCSWs in private practice became providers for Medicaid HUSKY and the ratio of beds to social workers in nursing homes went from 120/1 to 60/1.

Annual Awards, continued

His leadership and his partnerships with other organizations helped to stop bills that would have allowed health insurers to offer “bare bones” policies omitting coverage for mental health and these same partnerships then became critical in passing mental health parity laws back in 1998 and 2000. It is noteworthy that the bills that Steve and NASW/CT stopped from passing were often as important as the bills that were ultimately passed.

The legislative session of 2022 stands as an example of what is possible when you have created strong networks, mutually respectful relationships, and solid foundations. Steve led Connecticut’s NASW Chapter through a legislative session that was perhaps the most productive for the advancement of social work in at least 30 years. The Covid-19 pandemic illuminated the importance and value of social workers to policy makers, allowing for the passage of a bill that now permits trauma-informed LCSWs, joining psychiatrists and psychologists, to conduct mental health assessment of police officers. Steve lobbied for allowing out-of-state social workers who have existing therapeutic relationships with clients to continue treating their Connecticut clients

through telehealth. While this bill sunsets on June 30, 2024, Steve’s efforts have resulted in yet another future bill requesting permanence. 2021 was the year the ratio of beds to social workers in nursing homes changed so dramatically. In 2022, he also crafted and delivered Recommendations for Addressing Children’s Mental Crisis in CT to key legislators and members of the Children, Public Health, and Labor and Public Employees legislative committees at the start of the session and used the document as a lobbying tool. This model will continue to be used for important bills in 2024 and beyond.

Steve’s devotion to the profession of social work, his skill as a lobbyist, and his persistence in elevating and sustaining the role of social workers in Connecticut for over three and a half decades is truly unrivaled. It is an honor for the Chapter to celebrate Steve’s dedication to NASW/CT with the Lifetime Achievement Award!

An amazing evening! An amazing group of individuals who have made a difference!

Pamela Nixon
Manager of Professional Development

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NASW/CT Monthly Peer Ethics Support Group



NASW/CT Ethics Committee is proud to announce the first Virtual Monthly Peer Ethics Support Group! This group is free and open to all NASW Members. The purpose of this group is to provide social workers professional, educational, and peer support related to ethical challenges and dilemmas. Next group is October 26, 2023. The following dates are scheduled for the remainder of 2023:

October 26, 2023

November 23, 2023 (tentative)

December 22, 2023 (tentative)

Who can join the Peer Support Group?

-NASW Members from any chapter can join the support group. Social workers who work in a variety of practice settings are welcome to attend!

When does group take place?

-Group will occur the 4th Thursday of each month from 6:30pm-7:30pm (EST) starting January 26, 2023.

How do I sign up?

-An email can be sent to Yvette Tyndale, Ethics Committee Chair at yvette.tyndale@outlook.com to register. 10 spaces will be available each month.

Is the group open or closed?

-This is an open group. New members are welcome each month!

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UConn School of Social Work announces Connecticut ¡Adelante!

As the U.S. Latino population continues to grow, there continues to be a demand for culturally and linguistically competent Spanish-English bilingual social workers. Connecticut ¡Adelante! is an MSW program option designed to enhance the language proficiency of Spanish speaking social work students, interested in pursuing a concentration in Individuals, Groups, and Families. The program will help address Connecticut's increased workforce need by preparing students to address the mental health needs of children and adolescents and their families.

Accepted students are eligible to receive \$2,500 in tuition assistance each semester during the two-year program, for a total of up to \$10,000. Students must be Spanish speaking, be in their first-year foundation placement, and have an interest in addressing the mental health needs of children/adolescents.

For more information, please visit our website [Connecticut ¡Adelante! | School of Social Work \(uconn.edu\)](https://uconn.edu/connecticut-adelante/) or contact eunices.pineda@uconn.edu

Interested in attending one of our upcoming info sessions? Please register [here](#)

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- Wednesday, October 4 at 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, November 7 at 6:30 p.m.

Virtual

- Friday, October 13 at 12 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 18 at 11:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, November 28 at 3:30 p.m.
- Thursday, December 14 at 12:00 p.m.

For more information, contact
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Change Membership Data
National Office, DC 800-742-4089*
*Members can make changes online www.socialworkers.org

NASW Assurance Services 855-385-2160

LCSW Exam Application—Department of Health 800-509-7603

Ethical Questions 860-257-8066 x202
Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, NASW/CT Executive Director skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org

Committee Participation
NASW/CT Chapter Staff 860-257-8066

Licensing Questions
NASW/CT Chapter Staff 860-257-8066

Continuing Education Information/Conference Questions 860-371-8183
Pamela Nixon, Manager of Continuing Education, pnixon.naswct@socialworkers.org

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Meghan Maxwell, NASW/CT Office Administrator mmaxwell.naswct@socialworkers.org