

IFSW North American Region Report - 2020-22

Region - IFSW North America

Country Members of the region – Canada and United States of America

Names, countries, and positions of the Executive

Mildred “Mit” Joyner, DPS, MSW, LCSW

President, IFSW-North American Region

President, National Association of Social Workers, USA (NASW-USA)

Joan Davis-Whelan, MSW, RSW

Vice President, IFSW-North American Region

President, Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW)

Name, countries of the representatives in the different commissions

Education: Dr. Gary Bailey (US), Regional Commissioner

Ethics: Dawn Hobdy (US), Global Commissioner (through Dec 2021); Kim Strom (US), Regional Commissioner

Human Rights: Mark Lusk (US), Regional Commissioner

Indigenous: Dr. Hilary Weaver (US), Inaugural Global Commissioner

United Nations: Michael Cronin (US), Regional Commissioner; Representatives (New York) (all US): Robin Mama, Elaine Congress, Anne C. Deepak, Hannah Burke (intern), Shenae Osborn (intern)

We are working to integrate Canada more fully into the commissions and into United Nations (New York) activities.



The IFSW North American Region is grateful to all our commissioners and especially pleased to recognize Dr. Hilary Weaver as the new IFSW Inaugural Indigenous Global Commissioner. Dr. Weaver is a Lakota social worker residing in Haudenosaunee Territory in North America near the US-Canada border.

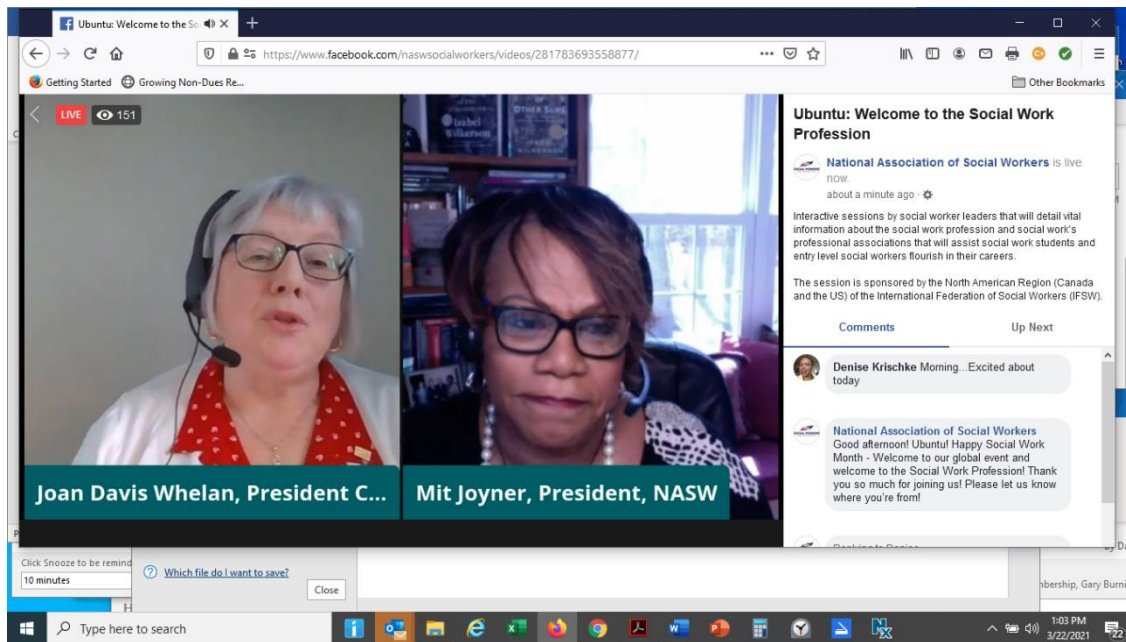
Report on the Regional Conferences

The North America Region hosted virtual conferences in 2021 and 2022.

March 22, 2021: “Ubuntu: Welcome to the Social work Profession.” The conference engaged with Social Work Students, New Social Work Professionals, and social workers in the region and beyond. President Mit Joyner and Vice President Joan Davis-Whelan served as the hosts. The

conference attracted hundreds of participants from Canada and the U.S. and other countries. The event was hosted on Facebook Live and received 4,700+ views (as of 4/28/22).

<https://www.facebook.com/naswsocialworkers/videos/281783693558877>



March 29, 2022: “Honoring the Indigenous Journey.” President Mit Joyner and VP Joan Davis-Whelan hosted the 2022 IFSW North American Region Virtual Conference on March 29 for all social workers around the globe. Sessions included: History of Indigenous Social Work and The Social Work Role Across Borders. Speakers from IFSW global leadership, NASW-USA and CASW leaders, the IFSW U.N.(NY) Team, indigenous social workers, Canadian and US social workers, and students from both countries – including IFSW Secretary-General Rory Truett, CASW Executive Director Fred Phelps, NASW CEO Angelo McClain, and IFSW Global indigenous Commissioner Hilary Weaver. The event was organized by NASW intern and Howard University MSW student Ms. Karessa Proctor.

<https://ifswna2022.elevate.commpartners.com/>

Report on General Activities and Achievements during the period in the Region

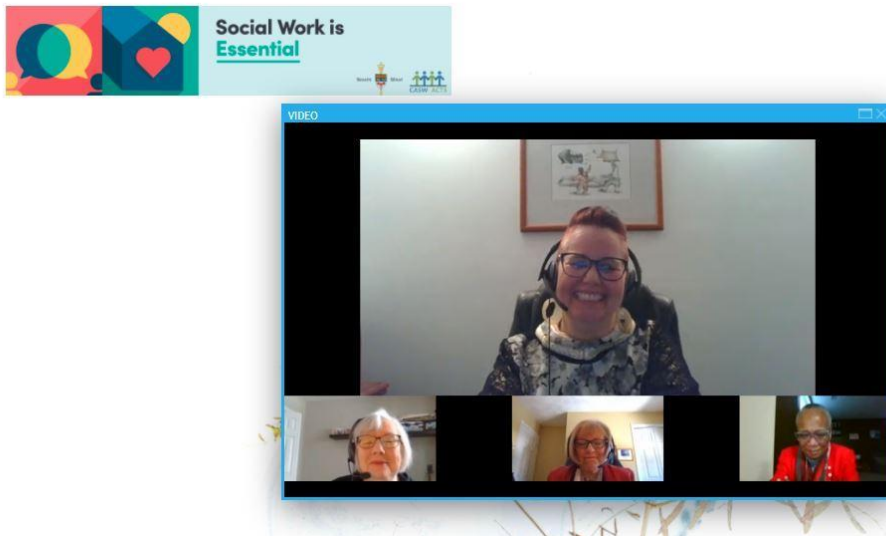
North American Initiatives - Together CASW President Joan Davis-Whelan and NASW President Mit Joyner planned a number of coordinated efforts including our two “IFSW North American Regional Conferences”. We also met with the IFSW UN colleagues to learn more about their roles and responsibilities. More collaborations and events are planned.

SUPPORTING SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WORKERS

Social Work Month 2021 and 2022:

National Social Work Month 2021. The CASW National Social Work Month theme “Social Work is Essential” resonated in the everyday efforts by Social Workers, especially as we still cope in a pandemic world. CASW was able to conduct a virtual “Hill Day”. With the support of our Social Work Senators Wanda Thomas Bernard, Margaret Dawn Anderson, and Nancy Hartling, two national webinars were delivered that focused on the ideas, peoples and places that have inspired them in

their careers – the giants in social work -- as well as the individuals in our communities that have molded and mentored each Senator's professional paths within the profession. It was a memorable and unique experience for Social Workers across Canada.



Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson (centre), CASW President Joan Davis-Whelan, Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson, and Senator Nancy Hartling, Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard.



Various CASW Members during National Social Work Month 2021.

2022 Social Work Month: CASW and Partner organizations hosted 18 events and webinars (4 Provincial, 13 National) March 2022 during Social Work month. The Canadian theme was “In Critical Demand – Social Work is Essential”.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau thanked the profession for the critical, essential contributions of social workers with a national video. <https://fb.watch/cEjs13PtBb/>

CASW initiated a **Member of Parliament online letter campaign** to promote the profession.

CASW issued a [Social Workers Stand for Peace](#) in support of Ukraine (March 29).

In 2021, CASW welcomed Ontario Social Workers back to CASW with OASW being a partner, promoting a sense of unity and energy in our membership as we all work together.

The Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) is coordinating with CASW events for NSWM that focus on the “Experiences of Black Social Workers in Canada”

2022 Social Work Month (March): The US theme for Social Work Month 2022 was “The Time is Right for Social Work.”



NASW-USA led the celebration of the 700,000+ social workers in the U.S. Highlights included celebrity messages from celebrities, letters from governors and elected officials, special events, and media/social media coverage.

SOCIAL WORK DAY AT THE UNITED NATIONS (NY):

2021: 37th Annual Social Work Day at the United Nations (New York): 1,900 social workers from North America participated in the live virtual event on March 16, 2021. The annual event is hosted by IFSW, ICSW, and IASSW. Moderator Dr. Robin Mama noted “it was the first time it was possible to be held on the actual day of World Social Work Day.” The theme was “Responses to COVID-19: Standing Together Makes Us Stronger”. The recorded program (90 minutes) is at <https://www.monmouth.edu/school-of-social-work/student-resources/united-nations/>



NASW CEO Dr Angelo McClain; Co-Host/Moderator Dr. Robin Mama; IFSW Global President Silvana Martinez

2022 Global Student Conference: Coinciding with Social Work Day at the UN (NY), and hosted by IFSW, ICSW, and IASSW, the global student conference was held on March 6 with the goal of activating youth empowerment. The theme was “Buen Vivir: Co-Building A New Eco-Social World. Love and Care of People & the Planet.” The keynote speaker was IFSW Regional President

Mit Joyner and the event was organized by student interns Malena DiMaggio from Monmouth University and Linda Levin from Fordham University.

Buen Vivir:
Co-Building A New Eco-Social World
Love and Care of People & the Planet

Global Student Conference
Sunday, March 6th, 2022
11 AM-1 PM EST

Register Here:
bit.ly/GlobalSC2022

An annual student conference to coincide with Social Work Day at the UN to activate youth empowerment

Keynote Speaker:
Mildred "Mit" Joyner,
NASW President, IFSW North American President

Guest Speakers:

			
Dr. Rosi Barbera Associate Professor, LaSalle University; Human Rights Social Worker	Carmel Alshaihi UNICEF-USA Youth Advocate; Global Affairs Student, Yale University	Emmanuela Shinta Indigenous Youth Activist, Environmentalism & Leader	Claire Crimando Peace Boat US Intern; MSW Candidate; Monmouth University

2022: 38th Annual Social Work Day at the United Nations (New York): The theme of the virtual event on March 15, 2022 was "Moving Toward Food Security for All: The Role of Social Work". <https://www.monmouth.edu/school-of-social-work/student-resources/united-nations/>



Foreign Social Worker Credentialling Assessment CASW plays a critical role in assessing, welcoming, and supporting internationally trained social workers. As the national voice for the profession, CASW seeks to welcome and support internationally trained social workers because of the contribution they make to labour force development, increased diversity, and representation, and enhanced social justice. A multi-year project was concluded this year which reviewed our current credentialling assessment process. CASW is committed to operating a credential assessment service that regulators and others depend on to be efficient, credible, affordable, and fair. The

comprehensive review included: jurisdictional review, stakeholder engagement, applicant Interviews and survey, file reviews and review of Social Work Distance Education Programs in Canada and Analysis. Recommendations will enhance and clarify the credentialing process for social work applicants.

The **IFSW Occupational/ Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Interest Group** was launched in 2021, spearheaded by pioneering EAP social worker Dr. Dale Masi (US), with the support of Secretary General Dr. Rory Truell.

COVID-19 AND VACCINES: The NASW Foundation and NASW-USA received major funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to educate social workers about vaccines and increase vaccine confidence in the U.S. The goal is to engage the more than 700,000 U.S. social workers in boosting COVID-19 vaccine confidence, uptake, and access, particularly among special populations with low vaccination rates and higher vulnerability to severe forms of infection, including: immigrants, refugees, migrants, rural, older adults, special needs (health, mental health), racial and ethnic groups, LGBTQIA+, pregnant people, etc. The initiative is in partnership with the Health Behavior Research and Training Institute (HBRT) at The University of Texas at Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work. The project engages NASW's 55 state/territorial chapters and specialty social work associations. Social work has a "seat at the table" and social work values and experience, especially with vulnerable and underrepresented special populations, are especially valued by the government and partner organizations.

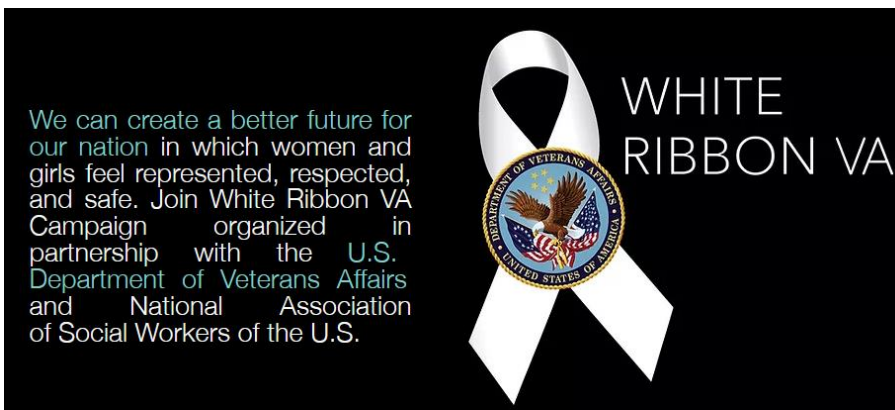
Project Website: <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/COVID-19-Vaccine-Confidence>



Domestic Violence and COVID-19: NASW CEO Angelo McClain helped promote awareness of the increase in domestic violence during the COVID pandemic.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Advocates/2021-October-November/Domestic-Violence-Intensifies-During-COVID-19>

In 2022, NASW-USA partnered with the US Department of Veterans Affairs for this national and international initiative.



NASW Virtual Forum: Reimagining Social Work in Health”, November 2021. Two-day virtual forum focused on health care social work, equity, and health disparities. The keynote speakers were leading anti-racism expert Dr. Ibram X. Kendi and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Andrea Palm (one of the highest-ranking social workers in the U.S. federal government). More than 185,000 US social workers work in health.

“Ethical Social Work Challenges During COVID-19”, April 13, 2022. A webinar hosted by IFSW and the Social Work Ethics Research Group was organized by North America Regional Ethics Commissioner Kim Strom for participants from the Americas.

Legislative and Policy Activities and Victories

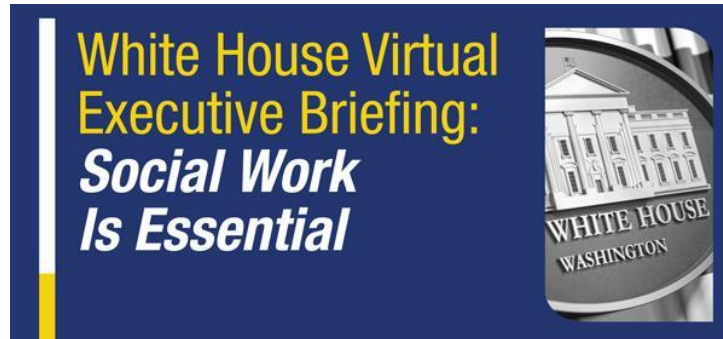


January 2021: NASW President Mit Joyner watches the Inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Blueprint of U.S. Federal Policy Priorities. NASW outlined 21 issue areas/recommendations for the Biden-Harris Administration, including COVID-19, mental and behavioral health, eliminating systemic racism, and ensuring civil and human rights for all. <https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Policy-Issues/2021-Blueprint-of-Federal-Social-Policy-Priorities>

White House Virtual Briefing on Social Work - NASW co-hosted an exclusive executive briefing with the White House which brought together key Biden-Harris Administration officials and social work leaders in July 2021. Administration officials provided updates on their key priorities and successes to date including COVID-19 recovery, vaccine uptake, expanding health and mental health care coverage, plans for climate change and environmental justice, and investing in the nation's infrastructure. Social work leaders outlined key priorities for action, many of which are reflected in the administration's current and planned initiatives and articulated in [NASW's 2021 Blueprint of Federal Social Policy Priorities](#).

Thousands of NASW members and others participated in the special briefing.



NASW President Mit Joyner and NASW CEO Angelo McClain speak with White House Officials at White House Social Work Briefing

CASW applauded the appointment of Canada's first federal Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in October and offered support. <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/historic-day-canada-new-minister-mental-health-and-addictions>

Advocacy on Behalf of Social Workers and Clients: NASW advocated on numerous key issues, including: Student Loan Forgiveness, Mental Health Access, Tele-Mental Health, and Reimbursements. Ongoing priorities include: Affordable Care Act Integration, Child Welfare, Medicare Reimbursement, Social Worker Safety, Student Loan Forgiveness, and the Social Work Reinvestment Act. More information at <https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Policy-Issues>

Social Work Policy Statements: NASW published ***Social Work Speaks***, which consists of updated policy statements for 2021-23. The policy statements set the parameters for NASW's positions and actions on a broad range of public policy and professional issues, including rural social work, voter rights and participation, mental health, hospice care, juvenile justice, foster care and adoption, and the rights of indigenous peoples. *Social Work Speaks* represents the collective thinking of thousands of social workers across all fields of practice. <https://naswpress.org/product/53653/social-work-speaks-12th-edition>

Racial Justice, Social Justice, and Advocacy

CASW has supported policy change and social justice advocacy through our efforts with uBIG (Universal Basic Income Guarantee), Permanent Changes to the Public Service Health Care Plan, and our Brief to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights: Bill C-6, an Act to Amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy).

Proudly, in 2021, **CASW signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Black Social Workers**. This will allow CASW to work jointly on projects.

CASW was invited to submit a **Brief to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights' Study on Elder Abuse**. <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/brief-house-commons-standing-committee-justice-and-human-rights-study-elder-abuse>

CASW marked the **first official National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada** on September 30: a day of reflection and mourning – but also of learning, understanding, and the commitment to a better future. CASW was deeply encouraged to see Bill C-5 pass into federal law in June 2021, making September 30th an annual federal statutory holiday. <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/statement-advance-first-national-day-truth-and-reconciliation-september-30-2021>

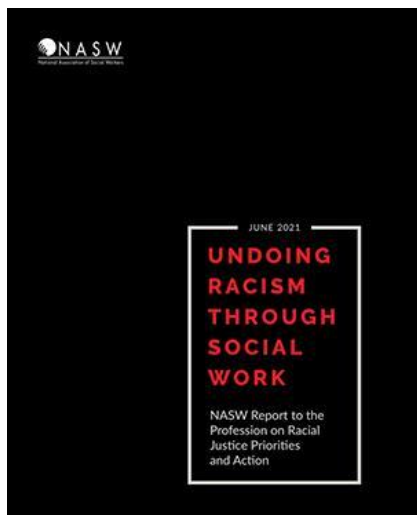
NASW continued to make **racial and social justice** a priority in 2021 and in 2022. Key activities included a virtual Townhall series, an apology for supporting policies and activities that harm people of color, and a report on racial justice priorities and action.

NASW Apology: On June 19, 2021, NASW released an apology for racist practices in American social work. <https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/2331/NASW-apologizes-for-racist-practices-in-American-social-work>

Juneteenth became a federal holiday in the U.S. on June 19, 2021. Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of African-American slaves and celebrates African-American culture.

APOLOGY
 VISION
 ACTION

NASW Report on Racial Justice Priorities and Action 2021: For Juneteenth (June 19), NASW held a Townhall and released the apology and the report “Undoing Racism Through Social Work: NASW Report to the Profession on Racial Justice Priorities and Action.” <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Ethnicity-Race/Racial-Justice/Briefs-and-Reports>



NASW Racial Justice Summit 2022: "Undoing Racism in Social Work Summit." On April 26, NASW-USA convened three small discussion groups of 40-50 social work racial justice leaders for a half-day virtual working meeting to help develop a profession-wide roadmap for achieving anti-racist social work practice. Following an extraordinary year of dialogue, analysis, protest, and commentary (June 2020-2021) and six months of focused DE&I work (July-Dec 2021) at NASW-USA, we are developing a nationwide roadmap for eliminating racism within social work. The goal is to build a plan that all social work organizations could endorse, setting forth the profession's vision for action to advance anti-racist social work.

Townhall Series on Racial Equity: NASW's series of Townhalls, which began in 2020, continued throughout 2021. Topics included White Privilege, Abolition, Eradicating AAPI Hate, and Undoing Racism.

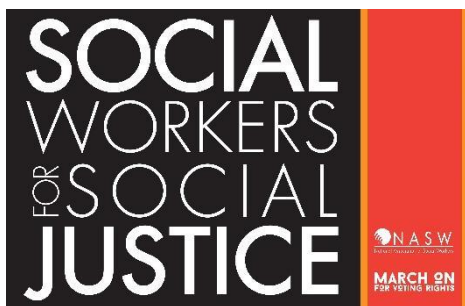
<https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Ethnicity-Race/Racial-Equity/NASW-Critical-Conversations>



NASW-USA CEO Dr. Angelo McClain and speakers at the NASW-USA Racial Justice Townhall June 2021.

March On for Voting Rights: August 2021 (Atlanta, Miami, Houston, Phoenix and Washington, D.C.—as well as in other cities across America and virtually). NASW and social workers across the country marched to protect voting rights. Led by President Mit Joyner, NASW participated with other coalitions on the March on Washington on August 28, 2021. Social workers were among the thousands of participants. Here are President Joyner's

reflections: <https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Advocates/2021-October-November/NASW-and-Social-Workers-Marched-to-Protect-Voting-Rights>





President Joyner walked with social work leaders, social workers, and students in Washington, DC.



NASW President Mildred C. "Mit" Joyner, and Attorney Ben Crump who represents George Floyd and others who were unjustly murdered attend [#MarchOnforVotingRights](#) in DC.

Women's March – October 2021 (Washington, DC and across North America)

Led by NASW Vice President Dr. Anthony Estreet, NASW's participation in the Women's March in Washington, DC aligned with the social work profession's fundamental ethical tenet of client self-determination. NASW's social justice focus also includes recognition of the impact of reproductive health issues on trans men and non-binary people, in addition to the impact on women. We view reproductive justice from an intersectional perspective that centers the voices of those disproportionately impacted, especially low-income women of color. Social workers participated at local marches across North America.

<https://www.facebook.com/naswsocialworkers/photos/a.10150600885121735/10157740750526735/>



How NASW Leadership Continues to Build an Inclusive Community – “Essential Chats with Mit” is a monthly virtual series that began in 2021. Programs are posted on Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/naswsocialworkers/videos>.

The September 2021 program featured NASW President Mit Joyner and two newly-appointed NASW board members: Dr. Alice Kay Locklear and Bisrat Abebe. They discussed Afghanistan, the dark history of Native American Boarding Schools, Voting Rights, Critical Race Theory, and Climate Change.

<https://fb.watch/8VpldkYd-8/>



Increased integration of United Nations and International Policies into National Activities

USA: NASW-USA has undertaken governance realignment to create greater linkage between the Association’s international focus and the United Nations policy direction and also to better include Canada in UN activities. NASW’s International Committee has been reinvigorated and will help coordinate activities in new ways.

USA: IFSW Social Work at the UN Initiative – Monmouth University, USA. Monmouth University will be one of three sites (along with Thailand and Switzerland). The Monmouth program will be led by IFSW Secretary General Dr. Rory Truell and Dr. Robin Mama, Dean, School of Social Work at Monmouth University, and an Advisory Committee comprised of leaders from Canada and the US, including NASW CEO Dr. Angelo McClain. <https://www.ifsw.org/establishment-of-the-ifsw-social-work-at-the-united-nations-initiative-at-monmouth-university/>

USA: The Grand Challenges for Social Work released its 5-year Impact Report in January 2021, highlighting accomplishments throughout the initiative and across the U.S. in its first five years of the ten-year initiative. The report acknowledges progress to-date, and goals for the remaining five years. <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/>

CASW submitted a brief to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities' Study on labour shortages, working conditions and the care economy.

CASW released its major paper on law enforcement and social services in this country titled [Safety, Community, and Social Work: Possibilities for the Future](#) (March 9).

CASW Director of Policy advocating with Canada Student Financial Assistance Program to see progress of **student loan forgiveness for social workers**. Proposed consultations to be made public in Spring 2022.

CASW launched a new Microsite under the domain: [Socialworkisessential.ca / travailsocialestessential.ca](https://socialworkisessential.ca/travailsocialestessential.ca)

CASW Strategic Projects 2022 (in progress)

- ABSW/ CASW Reparations Project
- CASW Website Content Update
- CASW Social Policy Principles and Anti-Racism Statement
- CASW Operational Review
- CASW Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Practice

Key Future Activities and Events: North American Region

Ongoing (US and Canada):

World Social Work Day: March 21, 2023 (always the third Tuesday in March)

Social Work Month: (every March) (US and Canada)

Social Work Day at the United Nations (NY) – Spring 2023 (US and Canada)

IFSW North American Leadership Meetings - Spring and Fall (US and Canada)

Regional Conferences – 2023 and beyond

“Essential Chats with Mit” - monthly series featuring social work topics. Open to global audience, live or recorded, at <https://www.facebook.com/naswsocialworkers/videos>

“The Rising Hate Facing AAPI Communities”: May 19 (2:30-4pm US Eastern Time)

“Keeping Allies in the Room”: June 1, 2:30-4pm US Eastern Time

NASW Racial Justice Summit 2022 Report: will be released in June 2022.

Mass Poor People's & Low-Wage Workers' Assembly and Moral March on Washington and to the Polls: June 18 in Washington, DC. NASW is a partner with the Poor People's Campaign and the March.

Juneteenth Holiday: NASW-USA is planning activities about racial justice on and around June 19.

NASW National Conference "The Time is Right for Social Work": Washington, DC (in person+virtual), June 22-25, 2022

The People's Summit "Co-Building a New Eco-Social World: Leaving No One Behind" June 29-July 2: Canada and the US will fully promote and participate in the conference.

Voting Rights and 2022 Elections: US primaries and the mid-term Elections - November 2022
