



**International Federation of Social Workers
2016 Report of the North American Region
Member Countries: Canada and the United States of America
2014-2016 Program Years**



OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL STRUCTURE AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION:

The IFSW North America Region is comprised of Canada and the United States of America and the social work associations from those countries, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). North America is represented on the Executive committee of IFSW by the regional president for North America, Morel Caissie (Canada), and the regional member-at-large, Dr. Darrell Wheeler (USA).

Both organizations have a dual mission of protecting the profession of social work and seeking to ensure social justice. The political climate in both countries continues to pose challenges and offer opportunities for social workers to support the dignity of all peoples. CASW and NASW have continued to produce publications for social workers and the public alike, remain active and visible on social media, and provide timely responses to current issues. These efforts aim to help both the public and all stakeholders to understand the profession of social work, how policy decisions will impact social justice, and strengthen the profession for the future. Both organizations have been engaged in addressing the de-professionalization of social work and also recognize the importance of research on evidence-based and best practices and are actively engaged in collaborating and disseminating such research. CASW and NASW have also spent a great deal of time addressing recruitment and retention issues for the profession.

CASW and NASW continually oversee the evolution of their respective *Code of Ethics*. They are also working with social work education organizations in support of comprehensive and relevant education programs.

The IFSW North American region has been actively engaged in addressing some of society's most pressing problems such as the economic recession, the increasing challenges related to poverty, and the unemployment crisis. Professional social workers in both countries have not only been tasked with caring for more and more clients, but are asked to do so with fewer resources and support. Both CASW and NASW have maintained active advocacy and political action outreach components to address these issues.

IFSW North America was co-sponsor of an educational forum entitled *Building Sustainable International Social Work Partners* with the undergraduate social work department of West Chester University in Pennsylvania during World Social Work Day on March 16, 2016. The Key-note speaker for this event was Dr. Robin S. Mama from Monmouth University.

The President for IFSW North America accompanied the IFSW president and our Secretary General for meetings in NYC for the 2016 Social Work Day at the UN. This was followed by meetings the next day with the President and ED of NASW as well as some of their key staff persons such as Bob Arnold, Director of the NASW Foundation and Dawn Hobdy who is representing the North American Region on the IFSW Ethics committee. Meetings were also

held with Sue Beck, IFSW ambassador as well as Michael Cronin who is the Main IFSW representative to the UN in New York and Robin Mama who is chairperson of the NASW International Relations Committee.

NASW and CASW were also invited to present the perspective of social work practitioners on a panel as part of an educational forum held in April 2016 and organized by the American Association of Social Work Boards. The panel included representatives of the educators as well as the regulators of social work in North America. Together they explored the inter-connected responsibilities and strengths of social work organizations that focus on education, practice and regulation and how to achieve a mobility model that fits our profession.

On the international front, the IFSW North American region was invited to participate in the second International Social Work Congress hosted by the Association of Professional Social Work of Puerto Rico held in San Juan in October 2015. The theme of the Congress was *The Right to health and social policy: Challenges for social Work*. The congress brought together social workers from 20 Ibero-American countries as well as representatives from other regions. The Executive Director of IFSW, Rory Truell along with Morel Caissie, President of IFSW, North America joined their colleagues from the Executive, Silvana Martinez and Rodolpho Martinez for the deliberations and conference activities. There was an overwhelming consensus among the participants that the conference was a valued and successful forum for dialogue and collaboration on the national and international scenes in promoting the right to health programs within the current climate of globalization and neoliberal policies.

NASW LINKS TO OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

NASW-USA has a long standing relationship with IASSW, ICSW, IASSW, and the United Nations Department of Public Information Non-Governmental Organizations. NASW-USA is also a member of InterAction and on the steering committee of the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (“Global Alliance”). NASW is represented on the Board of Directors for the North American and Caribbean Region of the International Council on Social Welfare.

NASW-USA partnered with more than 100 organizations and the 40+ sister U.S. social work organizations to promote causes important to social workers and worked to shape public policies that directly affect the lives and well-being of their clients and communities. NASW writes briefs and letters, testifies in hearings, advises on regulatory languages and participates in coalitions that seek to protect and expand the rights of all individuals and families who live in the United States. Issues include: health care reform; immigration; maternal, infant and early childhood health; needy families.

Partner organizations include: the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the Congressional Research Institute for Social Work and Policy (CRISP), the (Social Work) Leadership Roundtable, the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the Commission for Case Management Certification, and the Clinical Social Work Association (CSWA).

CASW LINKS TO OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

CASW remains connected to the Intersectoral Committee established to promote communication, connection and collaboration among the three sectors (education, association, and regulation) of the social work profession in Canada. It is anticipated that in 2016 the Intersectoral Committee will resign a Memorandum of Understanding and work towards a common agenda addressing labour mobility in Canada.

CASW is a member of over 30 national coalitions who have as an important part of their missions to advocate for social justice and improve the health and well-being of Canadians. Most notably, CASW holds leadership roles in three major national coalitions that advance collective strategies to influence the federal government in the delivery of health and social services.

CASW chairs the Public Affairs Committee of the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH), which advocates for improved mental health access and services and the reduction of stigma around mental illness. At present, CASW is spearheading consultations with CAMIMH in developing a consensus statement on its expectations for the federal government in developing a Health and Social Accord with the provinces and territories. With CAMIMH, CASW also is the chair for 2016-18 of its Champions of Mental Health

and Faces of Mental Illness initiatives that honour nationally, those advancing the agenda of mental health and illness in Canada.

Secondly, CASW remains an active member of the Health Action Lobby (HEAL), an alliance of 41 national health organizations, focussing efforts around developing consensus positions on the role of the federal government in health and healthcare. HEAL's most recent consensus statement, *The Canadian Way: Accelerating Innovation and Improving Health System Performance*, issues a call to action, noting that an effective health system depends on collaboration among all levels of government under strong federal leadership.

Finally CASW developed a co-sponsorship arrangement with the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) in the lead up the last federal election to make addressing seniors an election priority. The *Demand a Plan* initiative has continued post-election and is a public campaign to encourage the development of a national strategy on seniors care by asking Canadians to add their voice to the call for a National Seniors Strategy. It remains to be seen if seniors will be a priority for the new Liberal government in Canada however all indications are that the Demand a Plan has strongly influenced their inaugural mandate.

NASW REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

--**NASW National Conference 2014:** NASW-USA hosted a national practice conference, *Social Work: Courage, Hope & Leadership* on July 23-26, 2014 convened 2000 social workers to discuss important social work and social welfare issues.

--**NASW's 60th Anniversary 2015:** Celebration of NASW's 60th Anniversary and Forum on Ethics, Family Well-Being and Equity, 2015

--**NASW Social Work Pioneers®** 20th Anniversary Observance & 10th Annual Event, October 2014. NASW Social Work Pioneers® are accomplished social workers who serve as role models for the profession.

--**NASW National Conference 2016:** Leading Change, Transforming Lives (emphasizing equity, ethics, and evidence), June 22-25, 2016. The meeting of the profession conference tracks include: The Power of Leadership, Innovation in Practice, Promoting Social Equity and Justice, Upholding Excellence in Ethics and Advancing Clinical Social Work Practice, with expected attendance of 2,000+.

--**World Social Work Day / Social Work Day at the United Nations (NY, USA):** NASW-USA continues to proudly support Social Work Day at the United Nations both with a financial contribution and the attendance of several -----NASW leaders and staff. NASW CEO, Dr. Angelo McClain was a keynote speaker in 2015 and the theme was "All People Matter." NASW participated in April 2016 and the theme was "*Refugees and Displaced Persons: Ensuring --Dignity and Worth.*" NASW-USA each year also asked members to support World Social Work Day through social media and other efforts.

--NASW-USA worked in collaboration with other sister organizations including the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), Association of Clinical Social Workers (ACSW), and Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) to develop language in various documents to address the use of technology in social work practice.

--**Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice** The introduction of technology into social work practice has presented unprecedented opportunities for social workers to practice across jurisdictional boundaries—giving them mobility in ways not imagined before. This in turn has created challenges for social work regulators, whose job it is to ensure no harm comes to the public. The "Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice" were developed for social work regulators with input from social work regulators and subject matter experts from around the globe. The task force that generated these standards and managed by ASWB. These standards offer guidance as regulators think through amending rules and regulations related to the growing and evolving practice of providing electronic, social work services. An electronic version will be maintained on the ASWB website, www.aswb.org. In addition, the ASWB Regulation and Standards Committee will use this document as guidance in amending sections of the ASWB Model Social Work Practice Act related to electronic social work practice.

--**NASW Code of Ethics Review Task Force** In 2015, NASW established the NASW Code of Ethics Task Force to review various aspects of the current NASW Code of Ethics, focusing on ethical responsibilities when using various forms and types of technology. These responsibilities include informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, conflicts of interest, competence and record keeping. The Task Force was also charge to make recommendations regarding the current language in the Code that might be inconsistent with any proposed changes or additions related to technology issues. The changes/updates will become effective in 2017. In October 2015, NASW celebrated the

55th anniversary of the NASW Code of Ethics, assembling a panel of experts to discuss future directions in social work ethics. NASW also honored six pioneering social workers for their contributions to social work ethics.

--Technology Standards in Social Work Practice In April 2015, NASW-USA and ASWB invited other sister organizations including CSWE and ACSW to participate in the revisions of the current technology standards. The standards are still being developed and should be available in early Fall 2016. The Technology Standards in Social Work Practice address social workers' use of digital and other electronic technology to (a) provide information to the public, (b) design and deliver services to clients; (c) communicate with and about clients; (d) gather, manage, store, and access information about clients; and (e) educate social workers. They are designed to guide social workers' use of technology; enhance social workers' awareness of their ethical responsibilities when using technology; and inform social workers, employers, and the public about practice standards pertaining to the use of technology in social work. Social workers should consider these standards in conjunction with relevant social work laws (including statutes, registrations, rules, and case law).

CASW REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Activities with Members: CASW holds bi-annual joint meetings of the CASW federation and the CASW Board of Directors. The CASW Board meets four times per year. Each of the interest committees meets by teleconference at least four times per year. In addition the Editorial Board for the Social Work Journal and various ad-hoc committees meet throughout the year as needed. CASW emphasizes communications with members through the CASW website as well as through the monthly Reporter and the Canadian Social Work Journal. All social workers in Canada can also subscribe to a daily media monitoring service for those who wish to receive by e-mail a listing of up-to-date stories in the media related to social work and social justice issues, on the provincial, national or international scenes.

CASW has also dedicated significant resources in 2015-16 in building our social media presence. In this regard the CASW *Facebook* page promotes the profession while the steady increase in our Twitter presence influences policy discussion on the national level.

CASW's Key Campaigns: The political landscape in Canada dramatically shifted in 2015 with the election of the Liberal Party of Canada under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Trudeau replaced Prime Minister Stephan Harper whom has held power since 2006. Under Harper, Canada experienced a withdrawal of federal leadership in support of national standards in health and social services in Canada. The Liberal Government has signalled a return to cooperative federalism that seeks to develop with the provinces and territories national plans and corresponding funding to meet national outcomes while honouring regional differences. Given this new political reality CASW developed a bold legislative and social agenda that to seeks to push ahead the next leap forward in Canada.

CASW lobbied extensively over the last few years for the restoration of refugee health benefits and were pleased to see the new government restore the program at a critical time when over 25,000 Syrian refugees were welcomed to Canada in the first two months of 2016.

CASW also applauded the recent decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that says the federal government's funding model and management of its First Nations child and family services "resulted in denials of services and created various adverse impacts for many First Nations children and families living on reserves." The decision says the government must "cease the discriminatory practice and redesign the child welfare system and its funding model to ensure First Nations are given culturally appropriate services. CASW also pledged our support to Aboriginal community organizations in calling upon the new government of Canada to make reconciliation central to their mandate by implementing all of the 94 recommendations of the Truth and reconciliation report on the Residential school system.

Social Care Act: The key campaign CASW is moving forward on the national level is the concept of a Social Care Act for Canada. A Social Care Act for Canada proposes principles similar to those of the Canada Health Act to help guide the Canada Social Transfer and other social investments, making possible a national strategy with shared performance indicators. From CASW’s perspective, this would help not only to foster dialogue around shared issues, best practices, and evidence-based programs, but also aid in producing comparable outcomes across Canada. CASW proposes that a Social Care Act for Canada be grounded in ten principles that would not impose restrictions or regulations on the provinces and territories, but rather serve as a catalyst for renewed federal leadership to support the delivery of equitable services to all populations across Canada.

Ten Principles of New Social Care Act for Canada:

1. Public administration	6. Comprehensiveness
2. Universality	7. Portability
3. Accessibility	8. Fairness
4. Effectiveness	9. Accountability and Transparency
5. Rights and Responsibility	10. Comparability

Basic Income: CASW recommends that the federal government initiate a process to review and renew the income security system in Canada with a view to the possibility of developing a targeted and affordable basic income. CASW advances that a basic income should be targeted initially to provide income support for all individuals who are economically insecure and vulnerable because of age, labour market status or differing levels of ability. A comprehensive basic income could build upon existing negative income tax mechanisms such as the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors, the Canada Child Tax Benefit for families with young children, and the Goods and Services Tax/ Harmonized Sales Tax Credit. As a caveat, CASW cautions that not all basic income or guaranteed annual income models are made equal: the implementation of a basic income should not be cause to eliminate all other social assistance programs and strategies. A basic income would be a key piece of a national poverty reduction strategy when simultaneously paired with other policies, such as national affordable housing and childcare strategies.

National Social Work Month: CASW chose the theme *Social Work: Profession of Choice* as the theme for National Social Work Month in 2015. After receiving immensely positive feedback, it was re-selected as the theme for 2016 as well. Selected to communicate the profession's unique scope and significance in meeting the needs of Canadians, the theme speaks to social workers’ distinctive skill sets in the face of Canadians’ evolving needs. The theme also speaks to the fact that Canadians continue to make social work the profession of choice in the areas of mental health, addictions, child protection, and community development among many others.

In 2015 and 2016 CASW has ran a national promotional campaign, in collaboration with our national liability provider, that has successfully engaged members in submitting why or who influenced them to make social work their profession of choice.

Each year, celebrations are organized in every province and territory at the chapter level of the respective social work associations as they promoted the social work profession through various media, poster campaigns and local conferences.

In both 2015 and 2016, CASW offered multiple Educational Webcasts to members to increase knowledge in a given field, promote the profession and social work research, and contribute towards the membership’s Continuing Education/Professional Development requirements for continued registration in their respective provincial/territorial regulatory bodies.

Social Work Month is also an opportunity for CASW to recognize social workers who exceed the normal expectations and make outstanding contributions to social welfare and to the social work profession in Canada. To that end CASW issues Distinguished Service Awards on a yearly basis to a social worker from each of the partner organizations within the Federation. CASW also has a National Award for Outstanding Service given every two years. This particular Award is given for outstanding social work practice at the local, provincial, national or international level, including direct services, service on behalf of the profession, advocacy, social policy, social development, education and research. Both these awards promote the visibility of social work by recognizing social workers who are champions for a profession that contributes to the well-being of individuals, families and society in general.

NASW MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT :

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW-USA) serves nearly 130,000 members through its 55 chapters and national headquarters. However, like many other large associations, NASW-USA must continue to demonstrate its value in order to retain members, or social workers will turn to other local specialized, or more affordable groups, or forego professional membership altogether.

Membership in NASW-USA has been holding steady over the past three years, with year to date average slightly higher than overall average last year. Membership totals year to date are at their highest levels for student, transitional and associate members.

In October 2015, NASW-USA implemented a dues increase in October 2015, raising the dues for the first time in ten years. The Association communicated extensively with the membership to explain the need for this increase and offered some flexibility by accepting dues payments in two-three installments prior to the member's renewal date. NASW-USA has multiple recruitment initiatives underway that focus on conveying value to former and never joined members. Students are reminded in the spring to join before graduation to take advantage of discounted rates for students and transitional members.

CASW MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

CASW is a federation of provincial and territorial partner organizations with individual memberships offered in provinces without federation status. In 2016 CASW will welcome back the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) into the federation. In Canada there is an estimated fifty five thousand (55, 000) social workers. The majority are members of provincial or territorial regulatory bodies and/or social work associations. Less than twenty percent (20%) are currently affiliate members of CASW.

NASW REGIONAL ISSUES

During this period NASW- USA took a very active role on political issues related to human rights and promoting the dignity and worth of people. The NASW Action Center on the NASW website provides information on pending legislation that NASW supports, opposes or monitors. Members are provided with specific information about the bills and ways to take action.

The following is an overview of some of the pending legislation, as well as activities that NASW-USA supported:

Political Rights/Human Rights

- Provided statement to the US Senate on consideration of Voting Rights Act, 2014
- Prepared statement on Syrian Refugee Crisis, 2015
- NASW provided support for US Supreme Court ruling on Affordable Care Act subsidies
- NASW provided support for US Supreme Court ruling legalizing same sex marriage throughout the United States, 2015
- *Social Justice Brief: Unaccompanied Migrant Children: Overview and Recommendations*. Important discussion on what social workers can do to address this crisis, 2016

- NASW partnered with other organizations on an *amicus* brief to the Supreme Court in support of a US Circuit of appeals ruling that block President Obama’s executive order to expand immigration deferred action program.
- NASW supports group to urge States to reject legislation that discriminates against transgender youth, 2016
- NASW supports President’s Obama’s Executive Action to reduce gun violence, 2016
- Immigration order/policy, 2016
- NASW supports strengthening protection against housing discrimination through the Fair Housing Act, 2015
- NASW signs onto Fiscal Year 2016 Humanitarian Funding Letter, 2015
- NASW joins other national organizations to protect safety-net programs from major cuts in funding due to Sequestration, 2015
- Publication of Practice Perspective on *Multiculturalism - Implications for Culturally Competent Social Work Practice*, 2014
- **Participated in the Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) Forum on Global Violence Prevention**

On August 9, 2014, an unarmed black teenager was shot and killed by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. This event became a catalyst for our country to again closely examine the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve, and as with any significant event, emotions have run high—throughout our nation—as we all struggle with how to move forward. A lot of work must be done to ensure that minorities and people of color are not systematically discriminated against in our law enforcement and criminal justice systems. NASW-USA covered these events, and other tragic events in Baltimore, New York City and Sanford, FL. The notion of race and its impact on the differential treatment of African Americans and other populations by law-enforcement officers and private citizens have captured national attention.

Criminal Justice

- Support of bill to secure the Federal voting rights of persons when released from incarceration, 2016
- Support of bill to provide evidence-based and promising practice related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention to help build individual, family, and community strength and resiliency to ensure that youth lead productive safe health gain-free and law-abiding lives, 2016
- Section webinars have included: Ending Mass Incarceration: The Role of Social Workers in Criminal Justice Reform and the Supportive School Discipline Initiative: Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline, 2014-16

HIV-AIDS

- NASW-USA collaborated to create Mental Health and HIV/AIDS Training Center, 2014
- Supported the appointment to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy , 2015
- Received new 5-year federal subcontract for SAMHSA’s Mental Health Care Provider Education in HIV/AIDS and Mental Health Initiative (2015-19) with the Education Development Center, Inc., the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychiatric Association. This program is a continuation of the HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project.

Violence Against Women

- NASW-USA signed onto the FY2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Request on Gender. This bill is a reauthorization and request for more “robust” gender language and updated language on the following: the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security to ensure congressional oversight, accountability, and transparency; an increase in funding for efforts to combat gender-based violence; and new language on the Office of Global Women’s Issues.
- NASW-USA participated in the Gender-Based Violence Coalition, 2016
- NASW-USA represented at the Roundtable Discussion “Female Genital Mutilation Cutting: Strategies for Education and Prevention,” 2016

Mental Health

- Sponsored and participated in the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Study and Report, *Psychosocial Interventions for Mental and Substance Use Disorders: A Framework for Establishing Evidence-Based Standards*, 2015
- Key role in the "Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2015", which supports Federal policies to ensure Mental Health Equity for Medicare Beneficiaries by ensuring full access to Clinical Social Workers and supports Medicare reimbursement rate parity for Clinical Social Workers, 2015-16
- NASW joins the *Campaign to Change Direction*, to change the way US addresses mental health, 2015

Aging

- Received John A. Hartford Foundation grant to bolster services to older adults, 2015-18
- Publication of Practice Perspectives on *Elder Abuse Neglect and Exploitation*, 2014
- Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act- Support Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the vital role of social workers in caring for the elderly

Health

- Support of bill to allow Americans to earn paid sick time so that they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families, 2016
- Joint grant awarded to NASW-USA and CSWE to position more social workers to improve US health care delivery, 2015
- NASW-USA joins the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and other concerned national organizations in signing on to a letter to the Congressional Leadership to protect Planned Parenthood from major cuts in federal funding, 2015
- NASW-USA signs on to ad-hoc letter urging the Senate to oppose a proposed 42% cut in funding for the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs, 2015
- Publication of Practice Perspective on *Affordable Health Care Act: What Impact this Law Has Had on Those We Serve*, 2014
- CDC-funded project, *Improving Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Prevention and Practice through National Partnerships*, as part of a partnership headed by the University of Texas at Austin.
- Behavior Assessment Codes Modifications – Modification of Health and Behavior Assessment and Intervention Codes and expand the Social Security definition of Clinical Social Workers, 2015.

Military/Veterans

- Support of bill to amend title 10, US Code to provide an individual with a mental health screening before the individual enlists in the Armed Forces or is commissioned as an officer in the Armed Forces and the other purposes, 2016
- Social and Economic Justice & Peace Section issue featuring "The Importance of Assessing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in a Health Care Setting: An Emphasis on LGBTQ Veterans" and articles on "Military to Civilian Life" 2015

Standards for the Profession

During this period, NASW developed Practice Standards and Guidelines for the profession that provide benchmarks that describe services that social workers should provide that employers should support and that consumers should expect. Standards/guidelines reflect current and emerging best practice trends and are a critical component of the professional social workers "toolkit."

In 2015, the *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* were released.

Promoting the Profession

- Support of the Social Work Reinvestment Act which is designed to address challenges of the profession. Areas of focus include fair market compensation, high social work educational debt, social work workforce trends, translating social work research to practice, social work safety, the lack of diversity in the social work profession, and state level social work licensure (as it implicates social work service across state lines), and the impact these issues have on the areas of aging, child welfare, military and veterans affairs, mental and behavioral health and disability, criminal justice and correctional systems, health and issues affecting women and families.

- Student Loan Forgiveness – support Loan Forgiveness for Social Work Students and Graduates. Reauthorize the HFA loan forgiveness program and appropriate funding to support its use and implementation for social work students and graduates.
- Celebration of Social Work Month, 2015 “All People Matter,” and 2016 Social Work Month “Social Work: Forging Solutions Out of Challenges.” The theme is promoted by NASW, partner organizations, NASW’s 55 state chapters, and internationally with a special logo and numerous public announcements.
- Social Work Day on the Hill, 2015, 2016
- Celebration and Promotion of World Social Work Day. In 2016 alone Facebook posts generated 67,517 impressions (views) and 119,990 reactions (comments). The World Social Work Day poster was posted on Twitter
- Supported the SAMHSA Voice Awards to recognize positive images of social workers in the media, 2014
- Honoring the accomplishments of social workers through the NASW Foundation and NASW lifetime achievement awards
- *Social Work Speaks* published with updates on major social work policy statements, 2015

Workforce Challenges: Social workers in the United States, like our international colleagues, face daunting workforce challenges such as low-compensation, high caseloads, insurmountable education debt, and safety concerns that compromise their ability to provide their clients with service and care. It is essential to identify the specific work and impact of social work practice as a potential driver for addressing daunting workforce challenges. NASW worked diligently to promote the Social Work Reinvestment Act (SWRA). This act will analyze these workforce shortage challenges and will determine the best course of action to address them. SWRA was reintroduced in the US House of Representatives and Senate during this period.

Grand Challenges: NASW-USA is working with other social work organizations on the Grand Challenges for Social Work. The American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (AASWSW) publicly announced the 12 Grand Challenges for Social Work at the annual Society for Social Work Research conference. The Grand Challenges represent an agenda that focuses on improving individual and family well-being, strengthening the social fabric, and helping create a more just society.

CASW REGIONAL ISSUES:

CASW maintains a network of social workers across Canada that serves to support its policy development. With that said, CASW relies heavily on the engagement of its federation partner organizations in identifying and developing positions on national issues. In Canada the delivery of social services is a responsibility of the provinces and territories. Consequently CASW concentrates its advocacy on the role of the federal government in supporting provincial and territories social service delivery. In turn, the CASW Partner Organizations provide CASW consultation on how policies and national legislation is experienced in their region. To this end CASW has Social Policy protocol that requires consultation with Partner Organizations prior to publicly releasing policy and legislative positions.

Finally, CASW maintains five Interest Groups that each has appointed members from all CASW federation Partner Organizations. The Interest Groups currently are: Children’s, Social Policy, Aboriginal, Health and Private Practice. The CASW Interest Group structure is currently under review by the CASW Board to determine if the current structure optimizes engagement.

FUTURE VISION FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN REGION OF IFSW

CASW and NASW have worked together cooperatively in an effort to strengthen the profession in the region. The framework of the collaboration continues to operate under a Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU between CASW and NASW signed on July 11, 2012, at the IFSW Conference in Sweden, also included a provision whereby the two organizations agreed to rotate the IFSW North American President, and the IFSW Member at large positions, every two years. Darrell Wheeler will assume responsibility as IFSW North American President in July

2016. The incoming president of CASW (to be elected in June 2016) will assume the position of member-at-large for the region.

The region supported the concept of a regional Global Agenda implementation committee over the last two years but this has proven to be a challenge to establish. At the same time the IFSW region had also proposed the establishment of an on-line community for colleagues in the region. The idea was to facilitate information sharing, networking and collaboration in teaching, research and practice. We have not made extensive use of the web-portal for the North American Region on the IFSW web site and our intention would be to make better use of this avenue as a means to inform the international community about what is happening on the North American scene.