

## **Social Work Month is in March, and the 2022 theme is THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR SOCIAL WORK**

The nation's almost 720,000 social workers entered the field because they have a strong desire to help people and to make our communities, our nation, and our world a better place to live.

Social workers don't try to tell people how to do this. Instead, they empower people, giving them the skills, knowledge, resources, and encouragement to overcome life's challenges.

Each day social workers touch millions of lives. In fact, you, a family member, or a friend have likely already been helped by a social worker. You will find social workers practically everywhere, working in schools, hospitals, mental health care facilities, veteran centers, child welfare agencies and in local, state, and federal government.

These social workers include Kelly Bruno, CEO of National Health Foundation in Los Angeles, Calif., who has dedicated her career to helping end homelessness; Rick Miller, a Massachusetts social worker who provides mental health services to the sometimes-neglected members of the LGBTQIA+ community; Chad Dion Lassiter, Executive Director at the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC), one of the nation's leading experts on ending racism; and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), who works to ensure our government uplifts the most vulnerable in our society.

(OPTIONAL PUT EXAMPLES OF LOCAL SOCIAL WORKERS YOU MAY KNOW HERE)

Social work has been around for more than a century and social workers have been in the forefront of helping create this nation's social safety net, advocating for equal rights for all, and improving delivery of health care and mental health care.

This year's Social Work Month theme is "The Time is Right for Social Work." We think this theme resonates because social workers are on the frontlines helping our nation overcome a variety of current challenges – the COVID-19 pandemic, economic inequality, natural disasters worsened by global warming to name a few.

The need for more social workers is reflected in data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which notes social work is one of the fastest growing professions in the United States. There are expected to be more than 800,000 social workers in the United States by 2030, up 12 percent from 2020.

Yet social workers need your support. They deserve higher salaries and more programs that make it easier for people to enter and work in the field, such as student loan forgiveness. Consider contacting your lawmakers and urging them to support the Improving Access to Mental Health Act and the Social Work Reinvestment Act, legislation that would support the profession.

(INCLUDE ANY LOCAL INITIATIVES THAT WOULD HELP SOCIAL WORKERS)

And during Social Work Month and beyond we urge you to learn more about the profession and what you can do to help them do their positive, life-affirming work.