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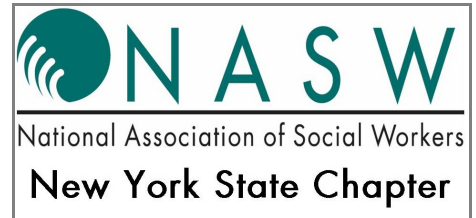
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Social Workers March on Albany To Fight Student Debt

Posted: 3/04/2014 17:49

Social work leaders and delegations of students and faculty from 14 graduate and baccalaureate social work programs from across the state converged at the Capitol on Tuesday, March 4th expansion of New York's Social Work Loan Forgiveness program. According to NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) which administers the program, it is the most highly utilized loan forgiveness program they oversee, yet it is the least funded. In 2013, 1176 applications were received however there was only enough funding for 32 new awards.



The message to legislators in part is a word of caution that despite NYS Department of Labor projections of a 23.3% increase in need for healthcare social workers and a 19.6% increase in the need for mental health workers, the recruitment and retention of the workforce under the conditions of low pay and high student debt is the primary reason for social workers moving away from positions in their chosen field.

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Representatives from the event's sponsoring organizations the National Association of Social Workers – New York State Chapter (NASW-NYS), the NYS Association of Deans of Schools of Social Work and NASW –NYC Chapter underscore the program's pivotal role in recruiting and retaining social work professionals in critical service areas across the state.

NY's current social work loan forgiveness program was originally established in 2006 and received a five year renewal in 2011 in the amount of \$978,000 annually. Grants are awarded to qualifying social workers employed in identified geographic and service delivery high need areas (currently there are 28 eligible counties) based on availability of funds. The proposed expansion requests an additional \$500,000 in annual funding for the next three years; the addition of home care to the currently identified critical human service areas of health, mental health, substance abuse, aging, HIV/AIDS and child welfare; and broadening the scope of geographic eligibility to include all 62 counties.

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“There is a mounting body of empirical evidence that social work interventions contribute to reduced health care costs and more importantly better quality care”, states Ray Cardona, NASW-NYS Executive Director. “Unfortunately for many, the financial pressures of managing living expenses and student loan payments that in some instances equals a mortgage payment, on a social work salary which typically start in the \$30’s is an overwhelming situation. Loan forgiveness can make the difference between a social worker staying in the field to continue supporting the well being of others, or leaving the profession in order to make their own ends meet.”



The National Association of Social Workers- New York State Chapter in Albany, NY, is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the state with over 8,000 members. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW-NYS also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy.

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Lashawand

We need help in Wisconsin as well I'm a social work major and I'm a junior and my debt is 45 grand and more.

March 4, 2014 / Reply



Judith M

Try to switch to another Major, since s.w.'s don't get paid enough to pay off their debts, and live a life whereby they can live at the middle-class levels.

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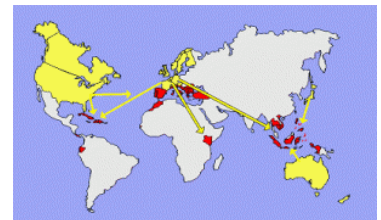
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