

Social Work Education Policy Principles 2020: A Call for Equity and Justice

Presented by the
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
and the
Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD)
Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE)
National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD)
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COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
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**ST. LOUIS
GROUP**
*for Excellence in
Social Work Research
and Education*

Executive Summary

The social work profession is committed to a mission of social, racial, and economic justice. The November 2020 election is an opportunity for the social work education community to engage and call on policymakers to support that mission. Our country is currently experiencing two pandemics. One, the COVID-19 pandemic, is caused by a virus. The second pandemic is the result of longstanding explicit and institutional racism and discrimination leveled against communities of color. The social work education community is an essential workforce in the fight against both of these pandemics.

As a national nonprofit, CSWE is the national association representing social work education in the United States. This *Social Work Education Policy Principles 2020: A Call for Equity and Justice* is offered by CSWE and its partners in the social work education community, who support the social work education and research ecosystem and include: the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD), the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE), the National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD), the St. Louis Group for Excellence in Social Work Research and Education, and the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). Among the organizations, over 900 baccalaureate, master's and doctoral social work education programs, as well as individual social work educators, practitioners, researchers and agencies are represented. These principles are not comprehensive nor exhaustive. Rather, they seek to propose policy principles that will be integral in ensuring individual, family, and community well-being, a well-being that is being threatened and under assault from a myriad of injustices and inequities. CSWE and its partners call on those pursuing positions within the federal government to consider these principles in the policies and legislation that will be developed after the election.

Social workers are integral components of our national care and safety net networks. Social workers provide invaluable service and support in a variety of settings including workplaces, schools, hospitals and community-based and mental health care facilities, veterans' services, rehabilitation centers, social service agencies, child welfare organizations, nursing homes, and faith-based organizations, among others. Social work education prepares students to work across gender, generation, race, ethnicity, documentation status, economic status, culture, and belief. Policymakers should actively promote the critical role of social workers in the pursuit of social justice at the individual, institutional, and community levels through helping individuals address their respective needs and access resources, while advocating for system- and institutional-level reforms. Public policy that incorporates the social work profession and its values, will go a long way to ensure individual, family, community, and societal wellbeing.

Policymakers must invest in the social work profession and social work education to ensure that the profession is able to meet the needs of marginalized and underserved populations. Among the many issues that must be addressed are: support for student aid; incorporating social determinants of health (i.e., conditions in environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect health, functioning, and quality-of-life; Healthy People, 2020) into new models of care; training on the causes and consequences of institutional racism and strategies to overcome them within federal government activities; initiatives infusing social work into activities and initiatives to promote and advance team-based interprofessional education, training and practice; supporting provisions under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA); and identifying opportunities to expand access and care for underserved populations, among other efforts.

These policy principles are expanded below and focus on social justice, higher education, equal access to quality health care, support for aging populations, and addressing behavioral and mental health needs, and substance use.

- Ensuring Quality and Accessibility in Higher Education;
- Ensuring Access to Care and Protecting Underserved and Marginalized Populations in Health Care Policy;
- Social Work: A Vital Workforce to Address Behavioral and Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders;
- Principles Regarding the Aging and Older Adult Population;
- The Role of Social Work in Social Justice

Ensuring Quality and Accessibility in Higher Education

Social work education, and higher education in general, must be accessible and affordable to students if we are to prepare a workforce ready to meet the challenges facing the United States. Furthermore, we must ensure quality in higher education. Schools and programs of social work are preparing a pipeline of professionals to serve in a number of capacities promoting individual, family, and community well-being, and social and economic justice. These professionals are working in behavioral health care, child welfare, schools, hospitals, local social services agencies, community agencies, advocacy organizations, and with veterans across the U.S., just to name a few.

CSWE and its partners support the following principles to ensure accessibility, affordability, and quality.

- ***Allow Accreditors to Focus on Educational Quality and Remove Barriers that Inhibit Quality:*** The federal government has long relied on accreditors to assure the quality of higher education. The role of the federal government has been to enforce the rules and regulations related to student aid. CSWE strongly supports this division and encourages higher education legislation to continue this practice. Because institutional accreditors are responsible for ensuring federal funds are going to quality institutions, it is reasonable to have federal oversight of this process. Most programmatic accreditors, however, do not have a role in determining if an institution is eligible to participate in the federal student aid programs under the *Higher Education Act* (HEA). CSWE supports legislative language within HEA that would assure that programmatic accreditors are exempt from federal regulations as they relate to accreditation. This will allow CSWE to focus on ensuring the highest professional standards, leaves oversight to the academic accrediting community, and accounts for institutional diversity.
- ***Higher Education Must be Accessible and Affordable:*** The need for postsecondary education in today's economy is undeniable. Increasing costs, however, make that a difficult reality for many students. CSWE supports significant increases to the Pell Grant and indexing the maximum Pell Grant to inflation. Policies like loan forgiveness as part of income-based repayment plans, programs like Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and other student aid programs help increase access for low-income students. Cost is a barrier for too many students, particularly students who are first-generation and those from low-income communities. Federal aid programs should recognize the need to provide wrap-around services and support to students, including transportation, food assistance, childcare, and more.

- ***Protect and Improve Implementation of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program:*** The PSLF program was created in 2007 to encourage students to pursue public service careers. For professions like social work, where wages are often lower when compared to other professions, PSLF encourages professionals to pursue opportunities in critical high-needs areas. Social workers provide invaluable service, very often public service, to society. Recognizing this service through programs like PSLF, will allow more students to pursue the profession, and allow them to achieve important financial milestones in their own lives. Efforts must also continue to ensure that implementation of the program is conducive to ensuring participants are able to access benefits they have earned.
- ***Recognize the Important Role of Graduate Education:*** Graduate education is vital to professions that serve communities throughout the U.S. including social work. While the bachelor's degree is the entry-level professional degree in social work, a master's degree in social work (MSW) is required for areas of specialized practice (such as behavioral health and substance abuse). Efforts that have made graduate education more expensive, such as eliminating graduate student eligibility for Federal Work Study funds, and the elimination Grad PLUS loans, will force students to take out private loans or make it so only wealthy students can pursue graduate education. Additionally, in light of the continuing demand for social workers to assist with mental health, substance-use disorders, and aging populations, social work programs should be designated for inclusion in the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program.
- ***Ensure Efforts to Address Campus Sexual Assault are Effective:*** The continued attention to sexual harassment in the workplace parallels the issues campuses have long had with campus sexual assault. CSWE firmly believes students and marginalized and underserved populations should be protected and believes that social workers as professionals are often equipped to provide support in this area. Higher education legislation should ensure that students have access to trained professionals like social workers and psychologists when addressing the issue of sexual assault on campus.
- ***Acknowledge the Intersection of Professional Competencies and Institutional Mission:*** A strength of the higher education system in the U.S. is the diversity of its institutions. Social work requires the ability to engage diversity and difference. This can lead to instances where institutional mission can conflict with professional competencies. CSWE supports higher education policies that recognize that institutional mission should not overshadow professional competencies, especially as it relates to programmatic accreditation.

Ensuring Access to Care and Protecting Underserved and Marginalized Populations in Health Care Policy

As federal policymakers consider health care policy legislation and regulations and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and its partners maintain the position that increasing access to care, strengthening the care individuals receive, and improving health outcomes is critical. This includes the need to address social determinants of health and eradicate health disparities, and the structural inequities that contribute to them, to improve overall health and health care in communities across the country. There also must be an acknowledgement of the critical

role of social work and social work education in the health care infrastructure in the United States, which is reflected by making sure social work is included in any new health care policy.

Social Work and Health Care

Social workers are vital to health care in the United States and in some areas, like mental and behavioral health, social workers are estimated to be one of the largest providers of care. The need for health care social workers is expected to increase, particularly as the nation moves in the direction of integrating social care into the healthcare delivery system. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) report “Integrating Social Needs Care into the Delivery of Healthcare to Improve the Nation’s Health” underscores the importance of building an adequate interprofessional workforce to address social determinants of health. Social workers are critical leaders in this space, given the many roles they play across our nation’s communities. Social workers provide services in a variety of settings in communities including schools, clinics, hospitals, child welfare agencies, and local, state, and federal agencies. Social workers are direct service providers, facilitate transitions, link individuals and families to available resources, administer programs, and influence policy. In all of these roles, social workers address the critical gaps in the continuum of care, which is essential to improving health outcomes. Furthermore, social workers address the factors that impact individuals and families that are not often realized within the walls of a clinic or hospital; they work to address the social determinants impacting health and health care outcomes.

Principles for Ensuring Access to Health Care and Protecting Marginalized and Underserved Populations

As policy makers consider health care policy, CSWE and its partners support the following principles that support its mission:

- ***Ensure Access to Health Care for All Populations:*** Federal policies should ensure access to health care and coverage for all populations, without the creation of new and undue burden, especially for low-income and marginalized and underserved populations. CSWE does not support policies that disadvantage or create gaps in care for marginalized and underserved populations.
- ***Ensure Access to Health Care During Public Health Emergencies:*** During a public health emergency, marginalized and underserved and underserved populations are too often disproportionately affected. Federal policies should ensure access to health care for low-income and marginalized and underserved populations. CSWE believes that all populations should have access to health care during a public health emergency.
- ***Federal Policy Should Address Social Determinants of Health to Improve Health and Health Care:*** The social and physical conditions in which people experience, also known as social determinants of health, can deeply impact health risks and health outcomes. Social determinants of health can include a range of factors such as freedom from racism and discrimination, socioeconomic status, access to adequate housing, access to nutrition, and education. Examining and addressing these factors for all populations is essential to building a strong “culture of health.” Policy makers should acknowledge the value of addressing social determinants of health to improve health and health outcomes of individuals and communities.

- **Recognize the Important Role of Education and Training in Health Care Policy:** Federal policies should reflect the importance of education and training programs for health professions, which includes social work, to successfully increase the number of health professionals prepared to work in integrated team-based environments and help meet the increasing health demands in the U.S. CSWE believes that robust federal investments should be made in health care workforce programs that include social work.
- **Federal Health Care Policy Should Aim to Eradicate Disparities:** While a great deal of attention has been paid to address health disparities, the U.S. is far from bridging health inequity gaps. Federal health care policy should reflect the value of coverage and access to care, especially among the nation's most marginalized and underserved populations, to help eliminate health disparities and in turn improve health outcomes.
- **Continue Efforts to Diversify the Health Care Workforce:** Federal investments in programs to ensure a health care workforce that reflects the communities where health care professional serve should continue and increase. A diverse and culturally competent health workforce is critical to addressing the country's changing health care needs. Programs like the *Minority Fellowship Program*, are good examples of programs that should be expanded and replicated.
- **Assure Physical and Behavioral Health Parity:** The U.S. has made great strides recently to ensure that individuals with mental and behavioral health disorders do not fall through the cracks. A critical step has been making health care coverage available for those living with, or at risk for, mental and behavioral health diseases, and ensuring that individuals get the proper treatment and preventive services. Federal policy should build on, not erode, the progress that has been made to ensure mental and behavioral health parity.
- **Continue Efforts to Transition to Coordinated Interprofessional Team-Based Health Care:** There is recognition that coordinated team-based care improves health. Over the last few years, federal policy has moved in this direction, and this is improving health and health care outcomes, especially when a social worker is included in the team. Federal health care policy should continue to support interprofessional team-based care to meet the needs of populations with complex health care conditions and improve health for all.
- **Federal Efforts to Collect Data and Evaluate Programs Should Include Social Work:** Data is important to evaluate programs and make policy decisions. Data collected on health care programs, where applicable, should convey the role/value of health professionals, including social workers.
- **Policies Should Allow a Professional to Perform to the Full Extent of Training and/or Licensure:** Policies that allow a professional to perform to the full extent of training and/or licensure in a health care setting are critical to meeting the increased health demands in the U.S., particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- **Social Workers Should Receive Fair and Adequate Reimbursement for Health Services:** Policies should ensure that today's social work students are educated and trained to work in a health care environment that values the role of social work as a conduit to improved health and health care. Financial policies should encourage care coordination and realize the significance of an integrated team-based approach to improve health and health care.

- **Support Social Work in Health Care Demonstrations and Pilots to Provide a Well-Trained Workforce to Help Ensure Access to Care:** To meet the growing and diverse needs of patients, medical education policies and federally-funded demonstration projects should be expanded and replicated, to support graduate and undergraduate education for social workers.
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Social Work: A Vital Workforce to Address Behavioral and Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

“Almost every front-line social worker will engage with a client struggling with substance use disorder or a family with a loved one struggling over the course of their career... They must be equipped with the best clinical tools to help clients navigate a path to treatment and recovery.” Marylou Sudders, Massachusetts Secretary of Health and Human Services

As one of the largest providers of professional substance use and mental health services in the United States, social workers are in a unique position to touch the lives of millions of Americans battling addiction across the full treatment continuum, including prevention, early diagnosis, intervention and sustained recovery. We also know that there are robust co-morbidities between the two conditions; substance users often also have mental health issues and vice versa. Many studies have demonstrated an association between adverse childhood experiences and numerous conditions in adulthood, including depression, suicide, and other physical and mental health issues. Social work is at the center of serving clients and communities of all races, ethnicities, and places of residence (rural, urban, suburban) to recognize and address many of these issues. Social workers operate from a holistic perspective, vital to helping individuals, families and communities fighting substance use. They provide services in community settings; schools; clinics; hospitals; child welfare agencies; and local, state, and federal agencies. If not directly providing substance and mental health treatment, social workers ensure that individuals, families, and communities are linked with these services, and furthermore, address critical gaps in the continuum of care. This is necessary to ensure adequate recovery and minimize relapse among individuals with substance use and coexisting disorders. In addition, social workers are prepared to address social factors that impact treatment and recovery, such as housing, education, and job security. These needs are often missed in settings that do not involve social work.

As policymakers consider policies to tackle mental and behavioral health and substance use, CSWE and its partners support the following principles:

- **Federal policy should support integrated health care where appropriate.** Evidence illustrates that individuals do better when they receive treatment and services for mental health and substance use disorders in one place or in a coordinated team approach. Where appropriate, federal policy should encourage this type of integration.
- **Federal policy should strive to meet the full needs of the individual.** Meeting the full needs of individuals suffering from substance use disorders is vital. This includes prevention, diagnosis, access to care, medication management, treatment, therapy, and support services that are culturally relevant to the individual. Such a holistic approach supersedes a pure medical course of treatment. CSWE believes that addressing the full needs of the individual is critical to recovery.

- **Federal policy to address the substance use must include Social Work as a vital part of the health-care team, to ensure that individuals, families, and communities facing addiction are fully supported.** Federal policies must reflect the vital role of social workers in helping bridge gaps in care which substance-use involved individuals and families often encounter. Social workers are key to ensuring individuals transitioning from treatment to recovery do not fall through the cracks, especially when they are in their most marginalized and underserved state, by providing seamless coordination on care teams.
- **Interprofessional team-based care models to help combat mental health and substance use, which are inclusive of social work.** As we have learned from the multi-faceted nature of the nation’s opioid crisis, an “all hands-on deck” approach is essential to eradicate this devastating epidemic as well as the next wave of substance use issues. The same is true for mental health disorders. Federal policy should continue to support interdisciplinary team-based care models, inclusive of the social work profession, to meet the needs of individuals suffering from opioid-use disorder (OUD), other substance use disorders, and mental/behavioral health concerns.
- **Federal policies should support federal education and training programs to ensure an adequate pipeline of mental health and substance use providers.** Robust investments are needed to maintain a strong behavioral health-care workforce to meet the challenges facing the U.S. including substance use disorders. CSWE commends Congress for making investments in mental and behavioral health workforce programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). CSWE encourages continuous efforts to support the pipeline for professionals to meet opioid and other substance use disorder needs, including support for social work. To help meet the growing challenges of the opioid epidemic, federal policy should reflect the importance of health profession education and training programs, including existing programs inclusive of social work at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as well as new programs.
- **Federal policy to address substance use and addiction, as well as mental health disorders, should address social determinants of health.** Social determinants of health are important variables in understanding best practices for addressing the opioid crisis. Policymakers should acknowledge the vital need to address social determinants of health to improve individual outcomes, as well as improve the health of communities across the United States.
- **Support efforts to identify and apply evidence-based practices by health professions to ensure proper care for individuals, families, and communities suffering from addiction and mental health disorders.** CSWE supports efforts to identify, apply, and advance evidence-based “best practices,” such as activities conducted through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) State Targeted Response Technical Assistance program.

Principles Regarding the Aging and Older Adult Population

The older adult population in the United States continues to grow as 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 every day.¹ Older Americans have enormous strengths developed over a lifetime. A great many also face physical, mental, social, or economic challenges, which can be complex and interwoven. In order to

¹ Additional information can be found at <https://whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/2015-WHCOA-Final-Report.pdf>.

prepare for the challenges an increasingly aging population brings to the health care system, we need to expand and strengthen the geriatric health care workforce. Social workers provide services in a variety of settings in communities including, clinics, hospitals, and local, state, and federal agencies. Social workers are direct service providers, facilitate transitions, link individuals and families to available resources, administer programs, and influence policy. In all of these roles, social workers address the critical gaps in the continuum of care, which is essential to improving health outcomes for older adults.

Increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for America's older adult population is critical. In addition, there must be an acknowledgement of the critical role of social work and social work education in the health care infrastructure in the United States, which is reflected by making sure social work is included in health care policy regarding the older adult population.

As policy makers consider legislation regarding the aging and older adult populations, CSWE and its partners support the following principles:

- **Support expanding access to telehealth:** Receiving healthcare can be a challenge for many elderly patients, especially for those that live in rural areas. In 2018, approximately 7 million older adults are homebound or have difficulty leaving home without help.² In light of COVID-19 it is essential that homebound elderly populations have access to healthcare. CSWE encourages policymakers to expand access to telehealth options to ensure the health of aging populations.
- **Support the health care needs for aging populations:** The healthcare needs of older adults should be addressed comprehensively, and services should be provided efficiently. CSWE encourages policymakers to provide greater provisions of health education, preventative, and follow-up services for both patients and caregivers.
- **Support funding increases for research on Alzheimer's dementia:** An estimated 5.8 million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's dementia in 2020.³ The NIH is expected to spend \$2.8 billion on Alzheimer's research in 2020.⁴ CSWE encourages policymakers make continued investments in Alzheimer's dementia research.
- **Support substance abuse and treatment programs and expand the geriatric substance use disorder health care workforce:** The number of older Americans with a substance use disorder has risen from 2.8 million in 2006 to 5.7 million in 2020.⁵ The mental health and substance use needs of older adults are complex and often inadequately met by today's health care system. CSWE encourages robust funding for substance use and treatment programs and a focus on expanding the geriatric substance use disorder and mental health workforce.
- **Support robust funding for-Primary Care Training and Career Development Programs: The Geriatrics Academic Career Award (GACA) and other HRSA Title VII** programs improve access to and quality of care for elderly and underserved populations by providing clinical training, improving geriatrics care research and education, and expanding the primary care workforce.

² Additional information can be found at <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2018/05/using-telehealth-to-improve-home-based-care-for-older-adults-and-family-caregivers.pdf>.

³ Additional information can be found at <https://www.alz.org/media/Documents/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>.

⁴ Additional information can be found at <https://www.alz.org/get-involved-now/advocate/research-funding>

⁵ Additional information can be found at https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_2792/ShortReport-2792.html.

- ***Finance the integration of health care and social care:*** Medicare payments and policy substantially influence health care social work. One consequence of this are the limitations placed on social workers to received reimbursement outside of behavioral health services. CSWE encourages policymakers to include social workers for reimbursement within care models, including the 2008 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report “Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce.”
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The Impact of Social Work Research: Principles for Public Policy

Our nation faces a wide variety of existing and emerging societal needs, including escalating health-care costs and disparities in access to services. Congressional and federal policymakers respond to these needs by creating legislation and programs to improve human conditions. In order to develop and revise social service policies and programs, legislators and implementers evaluate care and service models of existing programs and adapt them based on evolving trends. The evaluation process of social service programs considers the effectiveness of interventions intended to address specific societal challenges, scale effective successful models, and broaden access to larger populations.

A Need for Social Work Research

Social workers in academia and in practice conduct research to develop an evidence base for effective social service programs to address the complex needs of a diverse population. In partnership with the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR), CSWE advocates for such research to inform policy and program development to guarantee and enhance the quality of individual, family, and community well-being.

In preparation for the profession, social work students are taught to apply, evaluate, and investigate various models of care for diverse populations to support the best outcome achievable. They are also taught the value of social work research to inform the development and implementation of culturally relevant and effective services and policies. The educational training of social workers positions them to play a major role in people’s health, which we are growing to understand is largely impacted by societal factors. This grounding in evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence is the foundation for continuous improvement in policies and services. Through federal advocacy, CSWE shares social work research with policy makers to ultimately improve the development, delivery, access, and evaluation of federal social service programs.

CSWE and its partners encourage policy makers to consider these principles as they draft legislation and implement policies and programs.

- Federal investment in social and behavioral science research that coordinates basic and applied research to scale successful models of social services and support the full diversity of our nation’s populations.
- Policies and programs that recognize and have the ability to adapt to evolving societal needs, ensuring the social work workforce is prepared for population changes.

- The federal government needs to invest in research to study social determinants of health and supports investments in methods to identify and meet the needs of unique and underserved populations.
 - Incorporating evidence-based approaches in social service policies and programs. This includes the need for and importance of better data on the social work workforce in order to ensure federal investments in education and workforce training are commensurate with the need.
 - Integrating social and behavioral science research with education and training programs, ensuring interprofessional care providers are well-prepared to develop and execute coordinated, individualized care plans and at other levels.
 - Ensuring social workers have a voice in policy based on their research and that they continue to be a part of the discussions and eligibility regarding research, services, and programs.
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The Role of Social Work in Social Justice

Social justice is the principle of fair and just relations among people and their institutions, as measured by the distribution of wealth, equal treatment under the law, opportunities for financial livelihood, safety and security, education, and free of discrimination and bias. Social workers play many different roles in our nation's society, but central to each of them are the execution of social justice. Social workers provide services to individuals to assure respective needs are met with equitable resources and as a result, remain a critical part of our communities. Both directly and indirectly, social workers seek to mitigate factors which make leading a full and productive life a challenge for many by addressing poverty, discrimination, racism, lack of political power, oppression, and unequal opportunity. Cognizance and consideration of the contexts which contribute to these issues is a critical component of social work education.

CSWE and its partners support the following principles in legislative efforts to support social justice:

- Diversity in perspective, culture, and experience is crucial in all aspects of society and with the social work workforce. CSWE supports education that applies and communicates these values as this is a critical part of shaping individual life experiences.
- CSWE recognizes and calls for rectifying the disparities in social, economic, racial and environmental justice that lead to inequities in access to education, healthcare, political representation, and other opportunities.
- Every person regardless of status in society has rights to freedom, safety, privacy, access to adequate health care, economic opportunity, and education. As a result, CSWE supports legislation and understands the strategies needed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure the rights listed above are fulfilled.
- Environmental justice issues are tied to social justice issues and legislation that ensures no group and/or community are excluded from pertinent environmental policy decisions, suffers

from a disproportionate impact from environmental hazards, and/or lacks access to available environmental resources is critically needed.

- The adult and juvenile criminal justice systems have been used as tools to control people of color, especially Black communities. Policies and legislation are needed to reform entry into the system, enhance and improve prevention efforts and conditions of confinement, reform sentencing, and improve reentry.
- To accomplish the mission of child welfare in addressing child protection, in-home family preservation, foster care, and adoption, more attention and support is needed to ensure a professional child welfare workforce. This includes expanded support for Title IV-E child welfare projects, support for basic and applied research, collaborations, and increasing funding for programs serving children and families.
- Voting is a fundamental and critical civil right, which is under threat. Strategies and legislation are needed that support the right to vote and improve access to voting for all communities, particularly communities of color and other communities who have experienced voter discrimination.
- Vital support and reaffirmation of the human rights of immigrants is needed immediately. Family separation, abdication of the DACA program, and policy changes like the public charge rule are just some of the most egregious threats immigrants and others have faced. Comprehensive reform of the immigration system is needed to address these and other injustices (e.g., persecution, unlawful detention) experienced by the immigrant community.