



CalSWEC

California Social Work Education Center

Leadership. Partnership. Workforce Development.

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University of California, Los Angeles
University of Southern California
County Welfare Directors Association
California Behavioral Health Directors Association
California Department of Social Services
NASW California Chapter

December 12, 2019

California Department of Health and Human Services Agency

Master Plan for Aging

Stakeholder Feedback

Via email: EngAGE@aging.ca.gov

Greetings:

On behalf of the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) I am pleased to make several recommendations to the Master Plan for Aging related to workforce development.

CalSWEC is a consortium of 20 of the state's accredited social work graduate schools, all the 58 county departments of social services and local mental health departments, the California Department of Social Services, the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the County Welfare Directors Association of California, the County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California, and foundations. Created in 1990, CalSWEC is the nation's largest coalition of its kind working together to provide professional education, student support, in-service training, and workforce evaluation research—all directed toward developing effective, culturally competent public service delivery to the people of California. Our programs have trained several thousand MSW and BSW-level Social Workers focused on Child Welfare, Integrated Behavioral Health, and Aging, leading to employment in those respective fields. The Aging initiative has historically had limited funding and we see this as a huge gap in the pipeline for workforce development serving older adults.

Specific recommendations for the Master Plan for Aging:

1. Develop pipeline initiatives to introduce high school, community college, and college students to prospective careers in social work with the aging population; build into secondary school/community college curriculum.
2. Develop and/or expand gerontology certificate programs in community colleges, with specific linkages/pathways to BSW and MSW programs, with specializations in aging.
3. Stipend and loan forgiveness programs: Ensure specific number of slots per county are dedicated to social workers specializing in aging, with extra support for those

who also commit to working with underserved/vulnerable populations of older adults and/or in underserved geographies.

4. Stipend support not delimited to working in “aging services” per se, could also support specialists within safety net provider systems, including behavioral health clinics, community health centers.
5. Support for Social Work curricula/programs that embed a focus on aging populations within medical social work track, community mental health track, policy and planning track.
6. Funds for county programs that identify and support mid-career social workers, incentivize and train them to specialize in aging services/work with aging populations
7. Provide on-the-job training opportunities/incentives for Social Workers to get geriatric specialization/certifications/continuing education credits after they join the workforce.
8. Develop, incentivize, and administer an “Aging 101” course for all professionals/paraprofessionals working with the older adult population (mandatory in public program settings and also promoted to private domain).
9. Advance and incentivize opportunities for interdisciplinary team training and/or cross-training across licensed and non-licensed personnel in geriatrics and mental health, geriatrics and substance use disorder, geriatrics and public health.
10. Invest in a “careers in aging” initiative: a marketing campaign that emphasizes the employment opportunities in the aging arena, accompanied by a robust system of linkages between educational degree programs and job opportunities – will require pairing /partnering between educational institutions and public agencies /private non-profits/corporate arena.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of our recommendations. I am happy to discuss further with you.

Sincerely,



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