

Why Social Workers Should Run for Office

NASW encourages social workers to run for office because social workers are a profession of trained communicators with concrete ideas about how to empower communities. Social workers understand social problems and know human relations, and the commitment to improving the quality of life brings a vital perspective to public decision-making.

Social workers across the country serve in a range of political institutions, from school boards to city and county offices and state legislatures. There are six social workers in the US House and Senate.

Social workers make good political candidates because they:

- are well educated
- are articulate and experienced in public speaking
- are comfortable at persuasion
- are knowledgeable about their communities
- understand social problems and are committed to social justice
- understand how policies affect individuals and communities

Social workers run for public office because they:

- are attracted to politics through an issue or cause.
- realize they are just as capable as many officeholders.
- see the opportunity to make changes on a broader scale.
- want to provide leadership to improve their community.

NASW also encourages social workers to offer their professional expertise to campaigns. Social workers can use their skills as campaign managers, volunteer coordinators, and political directors. These jobs can also translate into legislative jobs in which social workers can shape policy, and help constituents by working with federal, state and local agencies to get individuals appropriate assistance. Social workers can also translate their involvement in campaigns into key appointments in state and local agencies in which they can oversee key government agencies to influence the practice of social work and seek social justice.

Contact NASW at pace@naswdc.org or 800/638-8799, ext. 418 for the contact information of other social workers who have run for office