NASW-NJ Diversity Plan

Overview:

The NASW-NJ Chapter is committed and has an intentional focus on diversity and affirmative action at all levels of the chapter, which is essential to our mission, purpose, and viability. Fully embracing National’s concept of diversity and cultural competence is necessary for achieving a vibrant, inclusive chapter that reflects individuals, families, and communities we serve in New Jersey. This plan focuses and operates on the foundation and constructs that are set forth in “Institutional Racism and the Social Work Profession: A Call to Action.” NASW-NJ recognizes that institutional and structural racism is a reality. This association seeks to continue to create dialogue and action, heighten awareness of the facts and implications of overt and institutional racism, and challenge the inherent inequities and historical injustices of white privilege, through the outreach efforts of this plan. In addition, we recognize that in order to create change and critical consciousness, education and training are key components of the process of building knowledge. Toward that end, we will continue to engage in extensive dialogues and inclusion efforts to build partnerships, and create and support programs and policies that will facilitate the successful implementation of our plan. This plan is a living document. Therefore, planning and action will continue to occur first within our own organization and progress naturally toward the promotion and execution of social change throughout the state and beyond.

MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY

Since 2010, NASW-NJ membership has increased in its diversity; however White females continue to be the majority group who make up the current membership. NASW-NJ seeks to increase members who come from diverse cultures and backgrounds. We seek to promote and establish committees, groups, and programs that attract a more diverse membership.

1. Identify and implement strategies to recruit and retain diverse staff, leadership, students and members.
   a. Identify reasons why people of color do and do not join NASW-NJ through Town Hall meetings, questionnaires, focus groups, etc.
   b. Identify barriers for people of color seeking leadership positions within NASW-NJ and reasons why people of color may not seek leadership positions through questionnaires, focus groups, etc.
   c. Identify how current NASW positions and policy statements affect decisions to join by people of different cultures.

2. Promote and encourage safe spaces for open dialogues within committees, units, and shared interest groups to assess and discuss internal and external issues of diversity, cultural competence, and social injustice impacting their respective under-represented populations; ensure members are aware that these committees, units, and shared interest groups exist and offer opportunities for members to communicate with them.

3. Ensure that relevant programming for membership is developed through critical consciousness, and whenever possible, addresses issues of diversity and cultural competency—including but not limited to, social worker exchange networking events, dinners/gala, membership drives, etc.
4. Introduce issues of diversity, cultural competency and social justice (i.e. white privilege, institutional racism, etc.) through our current media outlets (Focus newsletter, newSWire, photos, images, during relevant cultural heritage months, etc.)

LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

A disparity exists in the leadership of NASW-NJ. Historically, white females and males have held positions of power in the organization (President of the Board of Directors and Executive Director). This arrangement does not adequately represent the composition of the organization. Thus, NASW-NJ will continue to engage in efforts to recruit and develop a more diversified group of members for positions of leadership in the organization.

1. Continue to monitor and review the leadership development practices to ensure that leaders are identified and developed from diverse backgrounds.
2. Continue to develop methods to increase representation of diverse members on the CCNLI who will identify and nominate future leaders.
3. Leadership will continue to develop ways to attract people of color to NASW-NJ, submit proposals for and/or attend training programs.
4. Leadership will engage in a dialogue around the extreme disparities that exist in areas of incarceration, child placements, and health crises in the State of New Jersey. Consultants with expertise in these areas will be asked to join these dialogues. The goals will be to raise consciousness and mobilize efforts by the social work membership to demand accountability within these systems.
5. Training will continue to be presented for current and incoming leadership and staff on issues of institutional racism, white privilege/anti-racism, and critical consciousness around cultural diversity and cultural competence.

SERVICE DELIVERY & BUSINESS PRACTICE STRATEGY

As service delivery is one of the key components of social work practice, it is also a driving force of the administrative and business practices of NASW-NJ overall. As NASW-NJ focuses on quality service delivery that addresses the needs of diverse populations, it is more likely that general tenets of the social work profession will be achieved. For example, ensuring sound business practices in terms of requesting proposals/bids for business opportunities helps generate competition among vendors so NASW-NJ receives best value; increases opportunities for vendors who are at a disadvantage because they are not a part of referral network; and establishes firm actions to eradicate socioeconomic disparities in communities we seek to serve as a profession. NASW-NJ will use small business enterprises as defined by state and federal government by utilizing databases and lists that identify these businesses.

1. Ensure that issues of social justice (i.e. white privilege, institutional racism and diversity) are infused into the strategic planning of the organization.
2. Continue to monitor and review the business practices of NASW-NJ to ensure that standard business practices, as they relate to diverse suppliers, are utilized.
3. Seek to collaborate and do business with agencies that are committed to utilizing diverse vendors and suppliers.
4. Explore ways to utilize diverse vendors/suppliers to generate economic growth in the communities NJ social workers serve.
a. Utilize bonafide businesses that have been certified as small, minority-owned, woman-owned, or disadvantaged business enterprises.
b. Continue to ensure current business opportunities through NASW-NJ are not being awarded to vendors based solely on referral networks.

5. Monitor and review the human resource practices of NASW-NJ to ensure that standard hiring practices are utilized as they relate to diverse personnel in all levels of staff.
   a. Explore ways to attract diverse applicants for open positions such as posting on websites and in papers utilized by diverse population.
   b. Ensure proper EEO/AA employment guidelines are being utilized with respect to hiring, employment and termination practices.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE & CONTINUING) STRATEGY

Professional education is an integral part of developing culturally competent members and non-member social workers. Addressing issues of race and diversity at ALL levels of education is critical to the success of NASW-NJ’s Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan. NASW-NJ will continue to collaborate with Schools of Social Work in New Jersey to support and develop culturally competent social workers.

1. Maintain and develop collaborations with Schools of Social Work to discuss issues of diversity, cultural competence, anti-racism, power and oppression, and white privilege in the effort to execute the goals as set forth by this plan.
   a. Assist Schools of Social Work in developing and establishing additional measures to build on their minority recruitment and retention of under-represented faculty and students.
   b. Review and offer suggestions for improving curricula with reference to social justice, white privilege, institutional racism and cultural competency.

2. Ensure that continuing education workshops are infused with social justice principles of critical consciousness and white privilege/anti-racism that will deliver culturally competent practice and social justice.
   a. Maintain and develop better techniques for evaluation of proposals submitted for presentation to assist in ensuring that proposed workshops address issues of social justice and cultural competence.
   b. Invite qualified and competent presenters/speakers with influence among constituencies we wish to involve to speak at the Annual Conference and present workshops under NASW-NJ auspices. Update scholarship in issues of diversity, cultural competency, privilege and power for those responsible for reviewing continuing education proposals.
   c. Specifically request programs submitted for presentation which focuses on issues of cultural competency and detail issues of diversity, institutional racism, classism, and other under-represented populations.
   d. Invite publishers including NASW Press to sell books that address issues of race/ethnicity/institutional racism/white privilege/LGBT/Aging/Disabilities/cultural competency.

EMPOWERMENT, ADVOCACY & ACCOUNTABILITY STRATEGY

Empowerment, advocacy, and accountability are critical in shifting the “status quo,” affecting social change, and reaching the ultimate goal of equality. Key to this effort is the investment of time and resources to: a) assess the power structure, b) dismantle white privilege and institutional racism, and 3)
ensure that communities of color, aging, LGBTQI and other under-represented populations feel empowered and take ownership for affecting change on their own. Through this effort, NASW-NJ seeks to engage macro social work practitioners who are vital to the work of this organization and its success in the areas considered by this plan.

1. Continue to ensure that PACE Committee supports legislation and candidates that embrace diversity and affirmative action.
2. Continue to ensure that Legislative and Social Action Committee supports legislation that addresses disparities, embraces diversity, and assures affirmative action.
3. Continue to review legislative issues relative to diversity issues as they affect clients and social workers independently and in conjunction with collaborators and partners (i.e. NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice, Anti-Poverty Network, NJ Healthcare Social Workers, etc.) with common goals.
4. Continue to encourage local Units and Shared Interest Groups to engage in community efforts to promote social justice and assist in creating systems of empowerment and advocacy for under-represented populations.

PARTNERSHIPS, COALITIONS, & COLLABORATIONS STRATEGY

Developing and maintaining relationships with groups that have similar goals which help to strengthen the position and influence of NASW-NJ and the social work profession for the benefit of the clients and communities served. NASW-NJ continues to seek these partnerships, coalitions, and collaborations to enhance and develop opportunities for its diverse membership.

1. Create, develop and maintain relationships with organizations that advocate for equal rights.
2. Continue meeting and talking with member organizations of the Social Work Summit to address institutional and structural racism, diversity and affirmative action issues impacting all social work organizations.
3. Continue to develop efforts to address immigration issues in the State of NJ.
4. Continue to develop efforts to address problems created by poor economy and job-loss among citizens of the State of NJ.
5. Continue to partner with the Department of Health to assist in educating social workers about their initiatives to: a) address cultural and economic disparities and impact on diverse communities; b) review white privilege/institutional racism policies that impact Staff Training and Service Delivery.
6. NASW-NJ will continue to work with Rutgers University’s Eagleton Institute in their Ready to Run program with the goals of having NASW-NJ members attend the program and encouraging African American, Asian and Latina women in particular attend the campaign training.
7. Continue to seek out and develop collaborations with associations whose membership consist of underrepresented groups with common goals (i.e. African-American, Asian, Latino, LGBTQI, People with Disabilities, Immigrant and Refugee populations, etc.).
8. Continue to partner with the Society on Aging New Jersey to increase awareness of issues which relate to the aging population.