

## National Association of Social Workers State of North Carolina Budget Priorities

*The National Association of Social Workers North Carolina (NASW-NC) promotes, develops and protects the practice of social workers and seeks to enhance the effective functioning and well-being of individuals, families and communities through its work and advocacy. The NASW-NC state budget response is designed to support and advance the role of the social work profession and advance sound social policies in adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.*

The following are funding priorities NASW-NC recommends to the North Carolina General Assembly for FY 19-21.

- Restore **masters level pay** for school social workers.
- Support an **increase in foster care reimbursement rates**: \$6.9 million in FY 20-21 as allocated in the Senate budget.
- Restore the proposed \$36.4 million **cuts to LME/MCOs** who will continue to provide care as the mental health system transforms. This funding will support those with behavioral health needs.
- Allow for **expansion of Medicaid** in the final budget to serve close to 500,000 people of lower income, 12,000 of whom are Veterans. Providing health insurance through the expansion of Medicaid could potentially create over 43,000 jobs, \$860 million in state revenue, and over \$21 million in business activity for North Carolina.
- **Juvenile Justice Funding**: Include the House budget proposal of \$4.4 million in FY 19-20 and the full \$8.8 million in FY 20-21, recurring.
- Reroute \$500,000 in nonrecurring and \$1.2 million in recurring funds for FY 2019-2021 back to the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) to reduce maternal mortality and **improve maternal and child health** in North Carolina by funding evidence-based programs administered by NC DHHS that are implemented by public health social workers.
- Support **state employee raises** from the Senate plan which provides 2.5 percent raises in each of the next two years that would start in July 2019.
- Provide the \$4.69 million in funding proposed in the House budget to increase in the **Home and Community Care Block Grant** which supports important service for older adults like home delivered meals and in-home aid to help keep individuals in their homes. There are 11,000 people on the waiting list for these services across the state.
- Implement the \$893,000 in federal Social Services Block Grant funds to be earmarked to increase the number of **Adult Protective Service** workers in counties per the House budget proposal. There are over 30,000 cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older North Carolinians reported each year to county departments of social services. Counties do not have the staff to adequately handle this number of cases.