

NASW-LA Reports on Results of Social Work Re-Investment Survey

As part of the initial planning for the Social Work Re-Investment initiative, the Board of Directors of the NASW, Louisiana Chapter directed the Chapter staff to secure input from the social work community to learn more about who they are, their opinion of the NASW-LA, the impact of student debt, level of compensation, and value of continuing education.

The NASW-LA posted a survey on its website from February 26, 2008 until April 28, 2008. Also, during the 2008 Annual Conference, conference participants were afforded the opportunity to respond to the online survey. Highlighted below are the survey responses to the ten questions posed.

1. The age that I decided to become a social worker

<18 years of age	12.8%
19-24 years of age	41.5%
25-30 years of age	24.8%
31-36 years of age	8.1%
>37 years of age	12.8%

Of the 258 respondents, 66.3% of Louisiana social workers committed to the profession between the ages of 19 – 30.

2. What is the highest level Social Work Degree obtained or currently working towards?

BSW	2.3%
MSW	85.8%
DSW	1.9%
Currently BSW Student	1.5%
Currently MSW Student	6.9%
Currently DSW Student	1.5%

Of the 260 respondents to this question, the majority 85.8% were MSW's.

3. What is the area of your current practice setting?

Private	27.0%
Non-Profit	24.6%
Government	27.7%
Academic	20.7%

The practice settings were relatively equally distributed among the 256 respondents to this question.

4. The public image of Social Work is important to me.

Strongly agree	80.2%
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Agree	18.3%
Neutral	0.4%
Disagree	0.4%
Strongly disagree	0.8%

This is an issue that was clearly important to the 257 respondents of the survey. This level of response reinforced the value the Board of Directors placed on investing in a public image campaign.

5. I feel connected to the LA Chapter of NASW-LA

Strongly agree	12.0%
Agree	33.3%
Neutral	34.5%
Disagree	14.7%
Strongly disagree	5.4%

This question was viewed as an indication that more work is needed to get more members of the profession involved with their professional association. Of the 258 respondents, only 45.3% felt they were connected with the Louisiana Chapter.

6. I want to be more involved with NASW, but do not know how.

Strongly agree	5.8%
Agree	24.4%
Neutral	44.6%
Disagree	19.4%
Strongly disagree	5.8%

The results of this question are interesting. Of the 258 respondents, 30.2% did not know how to become involved in NASW, i.e. join, volunteer, visit websites, and join specialty practice areas. 44.6% of the respondents were neutral on involvement. While the remainder 25.2% knew how to become involved. An important caveat to point out here is that the survey was not restricted to NASW members.

7. I feel that the Louisiana Chapter of NASW supports me as a professional Social Workers.

Strongly agree	21.4%
Agree	40.5%
Neutral	29.2%
Disagree	5.4%
Strongly disagree	3.5%

The professional association of social workers in Louisiana is viewed favorably by 61.9% of the 257 respondents to this question.

8. I did not pursue the next advance degree because of student loan debt.

Strongly agree	17.1%
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Agree	12.4%
Neutral	11.2%
Disagree	29.8%
Strongly disagree	29.5%

The results of this question in the survey did not validate the premise of the Board that the major impediment to continued work toward the next advanced degree within the 258 respondents to the survey was not the result of the level of student debt. Further study on this issue may be needed as the respondents already had advanced degrees, (87.7% already had MSW or DSW).

9. I feel my professional pay is not adequate to pay off my student loan debt.

Strongly agree	35.8%
Agree	16.5%
Neutral	29.1%
Disagree	11.4%
Strongly disagree	7.1%

Only 47.6% of the 258 respondents did not feel that their level of professional pay was problematic relative to paying off their student loan debt.

10. The continuing education hours are important to the profession.

Strongly agree	61.2%
Agree	29.8%
Neutral	5.8%
Disagree	1.6%
Strongly disagree	1.6%

Of the 285 respondents, 91% were of the opinion that continuing education hours are a value to them as a professional.

The data retrieved from this first survey will be further reviewed by the Board of Directors during their August, 2008 retreat. We will use this data to develop our plans for the Chapter and the profession for the next year. We sincerely thank our respondents for taking the time to participate and encourage your further participation in future surveys that will be posted on the web.