

# National Organization of Forensic Social Work



**2017 ANNUAL REPORT**



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## Executive Summary

The National Organization of Forensic Social Work (**NOFSW**) has a long and vibrant history. It was incorporated in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1983 with the objective of advancing the education and practice of forensic social work. This included the establishment of a Code of Ethics, the development and delivery of curriculum in social work and the law, the advancement of best practice guidelines, and the promotion and publication of evidence-based research for the purpose of improving and developing the capabilities of its membership, as well as informing the public on issues faced by forensic social workers.



The **NOFSW** logo is a tree in a circle that symbolizes our interprofessional collaboration. **NOFSW** continues to enhance the professional activities of forensic practitioners, administrators, policy makers, and advocates by providing an annual conference, a quarterly newsletter, and the *Journal of Forensic Social Work*. In 2013, **NOFSW** performed another audit of its operation and management. A strategic plan was developed to address ways of meeting the needs of members in the twenty-first century. **NOFSW** remains a strong and viable membership organization and celebrated its 34th anniversary in Boston, MA in 2017. Website: [www.nofsw.com](http://www.nofsw.com)

## Mission Statement

The mission of the National Organization of Forensic Social Work is to support the professional development of its members by:

-  constructing and maintaining forensic standards and best practices
-  producing quality materials for inter-professional forensic education and practice
-  conducting and disseminating forensic research and scholarship
-  advocating for court-involved children, youth, adults, and families

## Vision Statement

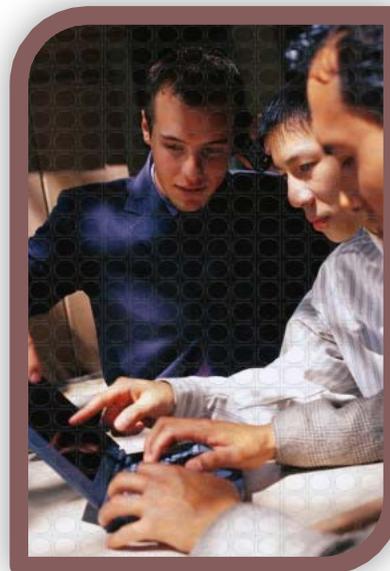
The National Organization of Forensic Social Work endeavors to advance social justice through the inter-professional collaboration of human services and legal systems.

## Membership

**NOFSW** membership has more than 200 active members in the following membership categories:

-  Full Members
-  Associate Members
-  Allied Professional Members
-  Student Members
-  Retired Members
-  Founding Members

Members receive online access to: archived issues of the *Journal of Forensic Social Work*, the newsletter – *Open Court*, conference handouts, as well as discounts at the annual conference and participation in online discussion boards.



### What is Forensic Social Work?

Forensic social work is the application of social work to questions and issues relating to law and legal systems. This specialty goes far beyond clinics and psychiatric hospitals for criminal defendants being evaluated and treated on issues of competency and responsibility. A broader definition includes social work practice within legal issues and litigation, both criminal and civil on topics including interpersonal violence across the lifespan (offenders & victims); criminal, juvenile and restorative justice; specialty courts; child, adult and elder welfare as well as end of life issues; mitigation in capital cases; family and community mediation; mental health and substance abuse treatment in forensic settings; legal and ethical concerns related to work with forensic populations; and risk management for service providers.

### Can Any Social Worker Be a Forensic Social Worker?

Forensic social work is based on specialized knowledge drawn from established principles and their application, familiarity with the law, impartial evaluation, and objective criteria associated with treatment outcomes. It is imbedded in a framework that can be utilized by the court and legal professionals. The conclusions and recommendations of forensic social workers must withstand critical review and rebuttal from opposing parties. The training of social work practitioners has not traditionally included familiarity with the adversarial process or the issues that civil and criminal justice systems confront. Without such training, social workers called onto provide forensic services may find themselves at a disadvantage.

## Functions of the Forensic Social Work Practitioner

Providing consultation, education, or training to:

-  Social services, health and mental health professionals and students
-  Criminal justice, juvenile justice, and correctional systems
-  Law enforcement personnel
-  Attorneys, law students, and paralegals
-  Colleges and universities faculty and students
-  Policy and law makers
-  Members of the community

Diagnosis, treatment, and recommendations:

-  Diagnosing, assessing, and treating criminal and juvenile justice populations
-  Diagnosing, treating, or making recommendations about interests, mental status, or incapacities of child and adults within a variety of forensic settings
-  Serving as expert evaluators and witnesses
-  Screening, evaluating, or treating community service workers, law enforcement, and other criminal justice personnel

Other services:

-  Policy and program design, development, and evaluation
-  Community and agency needs assessments
-  Mediation, advocacy, and arbitration
-  Teaching, training, and supervising
-  Behavioral science research and analysis

Many forensic populations, such as racial and ethnic minorities, at-risk youth, the elderly, veterans, immigrants, LGBTQ persons, persons with disabilities, or those living in poverty or communities of violence often lack access to quality services and cultural justice. Forensic social work practitioners engage only in forensic activities within their areas of competence and expertise.

## Educational Programs

### Annual Conference

**NOFSW** believes forensic practice best serves clients when it functions from an interdisciplinary perspective. **NOFSW** conferences offer a unique opportunity for social workers and allied professionals to learn from one another while enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the interconnectedness of the law, policy, and practice. Attendees include social workers, psychologists, attorneys, judges, law enforcement, physicians, nurses, child custody evaluators, and various other mental health, medical, and legal professionals.

**The Changing Face of  
Forensic Social Work  
June 19-22, 2018  
Hyatt Centric French Quarter  
Hotel, New Orleans, LA**



## **NOFSW Executive Council**

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