



**Grand Challenges**  
for Social Work

# Social Progress Powered by Science

"Our Urban Landscape Mural" by Chroma Dolls.  
Photograph by Steve Reinik.

For more than a century, social workers have been transforming our society. Social work interventions doubled the number of babies who survived in the early twentieth century, helped millions out of poverty from the Great Depression to today, and assisted people with mental illness through de-institutionalization, aftercare, treatment, and advocacy.

Today our society faces urgent, interrelated, and large-scale challenges—violence, substance abuse, environmental degradation, injustice, isolation, and inequality. Today we need social workers' unique blend of scientific knowledge and caring practice more than ever.

## The Grand Challenges for Social Work

That's why the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare has announced a groundbreaking initiative to champion social progress powered by science. We've outlined twelve Grand Challenges for Social Work — a call to action for social work researchers and practitioners to harness social work's science and knowledge base, collaborate with professionals from related fields and disciplines, and work together to tackle some of our toughest social problems.

## Join Us

Now we challenge you to join this critical movement. All of us have a role to play in promoting individual and family well-being, a stronger social fabric, and a just society that fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers pathways for social and economic progress.

Join the Grand Challenges for Social Work to:

- Think deeply, boldly, and creatively about our society's future and social work's role in shaping that future.
- Develop and implement strategies that bridge the gap between social work research and practice.
- Take proven, evidence-based approaches to scale in critical areas.
- Collaborate with researchers, practitioners, and colleagues in related disciplines to create transformational, lasting social change.
- Achieve greater impact in your own research and practice.

Explore all twelve Grand Challenges for Social Work and see where you can make your greatest contribution.

.....  
Ensure healthy development for all youth

.....  
Close the health gap

.....  
Stop family violence

.....  
Eradicate social isolation

.....  
End homelessness

.....  
Promote smart decarceration

.....  
Reduce extreme economic inequality

.....  
Build financial capability for all

.....  
Harness technology for social good

.....  
Create social responses to a changing environment

.....  
Achieve equal opportunity and justice

.....  
Advance long and productive lives