



Western Reserve

Area Agency on Aging

Social Workers are...Problem Solvers and Angels alike

March is dedicated to celebrating the invaluable contributions of social workers. Among these dedicated professionals are those social workers here at the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, social work is one of the fastest-growing careers in the United States, with overall employment projected to grow 7% in the next ten years. For those considering a college education or a new career path, social work provides a stable and personally fulfilling course of study.

Individuals often become social workers because of a strong desire to help others and make society a better place, and our staff at WRAAA are no different. They play a crucial role in supporting and advocating for older adults and individuals with disabilities—our consumers—as they navigate the challenges and opportunities associated with their health and social needs. The work they do within our Agency is essential to ensuring that our consumers receive the comprehensive support and resources they need to live with the maximum dignity and independence possible.

Social workers employed by WRAAA, and other Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) serve as frontline advocates for consumers within their communities. They possess a unique blend of knowledge, skills, and compassion that enables them to effectively address these individuals' diverse needs and circumstances. Among the primary responsibilities of WRAAA social workers is to conduct comprehensive assessments of consumers' needs, considering factors such as physical health, mental well-being, social support systems, and access to resources. Through these assessments, social workers develop personalized care plans tailored to the individual needs and preferences of each consumer on their caseload. These care plans may include coordinating access to essential services such as transportation, home care, meal assistance, healthcare, and social activities.

These individuals also play a crucial role in intervention and support during times of transition or crisis. They provide guidance to older adults and their families during life transitions such as retirement, loss of a spouse, relocation, or health crises. By offering this emotional support, assistance with problem-solving, and access to resources, social workers help consumers navigate these challenging periods with resilience and dignity.

At WRAAA, forty-five percent of the staff are social workers, many of whom have been at the Agency for years; the average social worker has been employed at WRAAA for over eight years, and 19 staff members have been social workers at WRAAA for over 20 years.

When asked what aspects of the job keep staff coming back on difficult days, staff remark on how important and meaningful their work is and how connected they feel to their clients and their families.

Social workers are indispensable champions for WRAAA consumers, advocating for their rights, supporting their needs, and enhancing their quality of life. Their work embodies the values of compassion, empathy, and social justice, and their dedication contributes to creating age-friendly communities where older adults and individuals living with disabilities can thrive. As National Social Work Month draws to a close, we recognize and honor the vital contributions of these professionals who play a vital role in promoting the well-being and dignity of individuals everywhere.

Advocacy. Assistance. Answers on Aging and Disabilities.