SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

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Workplace Management and Child Welfare Policy, Planning and Administration Curriculum Module
Definitions of Social Policy

- Refers to both goals of collective responsibilities and to a set of services for carrying out those responsibilities.
- Set of laws and administrative rules that define the purposes of public social welfare and authorize organizations to work toward accomplishment of those purposes. (Compton, Galaway, & Cournoyer, 2004)
Social Welfare Policy Addresses

- Societal/governmental responsibilities to each other
- Structures and arrangements that enable us to carry out these responsibilities
- The extent these responsibilities will be carried out by formal organizations
Social Welfare Policy Addresses (cont’d)

- Extent that informal and self-help networks will be used.
- The relationship between formal and informal structures.
- Extent that public, private non-profit, and for-profit agencies will be involved in the formal social welfare delivery system.
What Is Involved for Social Work Practice

- Identification of a need/issue
- Community needs assessment
- Advocacy and planning skills
- Collaboration amongst service delivery providers
Social Welfare Policy/Practice

- Issues can surface from the "practice" environment.
- Initiation of legislative response to these issues/unmet needs can occur at administrative levels.
- Provides a mechanism by which "fairness" and "equity" for all citizens can be addressed.
Advocacy for Legislative Intervention

Can be accomplished by Lobby groups, special interest groups, professional organizations, and personal representation.
Advocacy Can Involve

- Visits to legislators/representatives
- Written correspondence
- Testimony
- White papers
- Research findings/recommendations
- Media documentaries
Social Welfare Policy/Practice

“Policy is not something in the abstract; it is part of a continuum.”
(B. Cornet, personal communication, 2007)

Knowledge of the legislative process is critical to sound social work practice.
Exercise

- Identify a current unmet need within your client population. How might you introduce this as an “issue” needing legislative action?
Implementing Social Policy

Steps

- Laws are translated into regulations
- Regulations are dispersed from the State of California Department of Social Services
- Counties receive notice of new regulations through receipt of an All County Information Notice (ACIN), All County Letter (ACL) or All County Fiscal Information Notice (AFIN)
Implementing Social Policy (cont’d)

- County develops procedures to implement regulations
- Monitor for compliance
- Evaluation of effectiveness
  - Can result in the introduction of amended or new legislation.
Summary

- Ability to influence and initiate action is found throughout all levels of a child welfare organization.
- Advocacy for change via policy can occur internal as well as external to the agency.
- Advocacy offers an opportunity for collaboration.
- Social Welfare Policy/Practice can become an effective strong partnership.