

## 2026 SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ADVOCACY & ACTION SANA DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE



Pictured: social work students in the Governor's Office during 2025 SANA Day at the Legislature

On **February 6, 2026** social work students from across New Mexico will meet at the State Capitol Building in Santa Fe to participate in **Student Advocacy & Action (SANA) Day at the Legislature**.



### *Upcoming SANA Trainings and Events:*

**1/27/26** • (Tues from 10 am–11:30 am) [Legislative 101](#) [Virtual]

**2/5/26** • (Thurs from 6 pm–8 pm) • [Pre-event SANA Social Time](#) • [Sage Hotel Social Kitchen + Bar]

**2/6/26** • (Fri from 8:30 am to 2 pm) • [SANA Day at the Legislature](#) [SF HEC & NM State Capitol Building]

Organized by the NMHU FVSSW [Center for Excellence in Social Work](#), 2026 SANA Day at the Legislature brings together collaborators including students, faculty and staff at organizations and institutions such as the [National Association of Social Work \(NASW\) New Mexico Chapter](#), [Eastern New Mexico University Social Work Program](#), [New Mexico Highlands University Facundo Valdez School of Social Work](#), [New Mexico State University School of Social Work](#), [University of New Mexico Master of Social Work Program](#), and [Western New Mexico University](#) School of Social Work.

New Mexico social work students, “SANA is your chance to turn your passion for social justice into real action. You are not just learning about policy; you are shaping it! Your voice matters and the decisions being made in that building [at the State Capitol] affect the communities you will serve as future social workers” said **New Mexico State University School of Social Work Practicum Education Director, Maribel Tellez, BSW, MSW**. “Advocacy is a big part of who we are as social workers. Participating in Student Advocacy & Action (SANA) Day is one simple way to make an impact” said **Eastern New Mexico University Social Work MSW Program Director, Dr. Melissa Moyer, LCSW**.

SANA provides students with the opportunity to not only develop their own legislative, policy, and advocacy interests but also provides actionable steps to create real progress. “Early legislative advocacy experiences like SANA shaped my own identity and growth as a social worker. SANA provides a unique

opportunity for students to engage, real-time, beyond the policy classroom, to affect real change” shared **Western New Mexico University Assoc. VP for Academic Affairs; Dean, College of Professional Studies; and Graduate Division Director, Dr. Patti West-Okiri, EdD, LCSW**

Developed by social work’s national accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the nine core competencies ensure that social workers can provide competent and ethical services. The content and learning available during SANA day and its preparation trainings are relevant to several competencies including, EPAS 2022 Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice.

**National Association of Social Workers (NASW) New Mexico & Arizona Chapter, Executive Director, Lauren Gomez, LCSW** explains “SANA day reminds us that policy is never abstract. Every bill and every vote at the Roundhouse shows up in someone’s living room, classroom, clinic, or community. As social workers, we are trained to sit with people in their deepest pain and walk alongside them through their trials and tribulations. But we are also called to stand in these halls of power and insist on justice.”

“During SANA, students can visit their legislator, attend hearings, testify on bills that are meaningful to them, leave messages of support or dissent on pieces of legislation, and join with others from across the state whose values, ideals, and goals are the same. If I were a student, I wouldn’t miss it for the world” said **WNMU VPAA, Dean CPS, and GPD, Dr. West-Okiri.**

**NMHU Facundo Valdez School of Social Work Interim Dean, Dr. John M. Tourangeau, MDIV, MBA, LADAC, LCSW** notes that the SANA day “...experience empowers participants to become advocates for systemic change through education about legislation and policy processes, platforms for decision-making and change, and networking that fosters connections with lawmakers, community leaders, and those passionate about the profession of social work.”

In addition to a learning opportunity and what may be a student’s first trip to the Roundhouse, SANA and its connected activities allow for networking and relationships to be formed and strengthened. “The connections and relationship-building that happen at events like SANA when students are in their degree programs serve as a throughline of support to professional practice with access to a community of peers after graduation” said **Center for Excellence in Social Work Professional Development Coordinator, Amber Vilas, MSW.**

The importance of student voice shapes SANA day and its significance. “Watching our students find their voice at the Legislature is one of the most rewarding aspects of social work education. SANA provides an invaluable opportunity for students to practice the advocacy skills that will define their careers” notes **NMSU SSW Director, Dr. Nienow.** On behalf of the NASW New Mexico Chapter: “social work student presence at SANA day signals that the future of our profession refuses to settle for the status quo. Students should attend SANA to ask better questions, demand better systems, and imagine better outcomes for all New Mexicans. Student voices matter; student advocacy is needed, and showing up makes a difference” said **NASW-NM & AZ Executive Director Gomez.**

**Join us in empowering the next generation of advocates! To register, [click here](#). To learn more about 2026 SANA Day at the Legislature and the Center Plaza, visit: [fvssw.org/center-plaza](http://fvssw.org/center-plaza).**

**For questions, contact the Center for Excellence in Social Work at [ceswnm@nmhu.edu](mailto:ceswnm@nmhu.edu) or 505-260-6197.**

