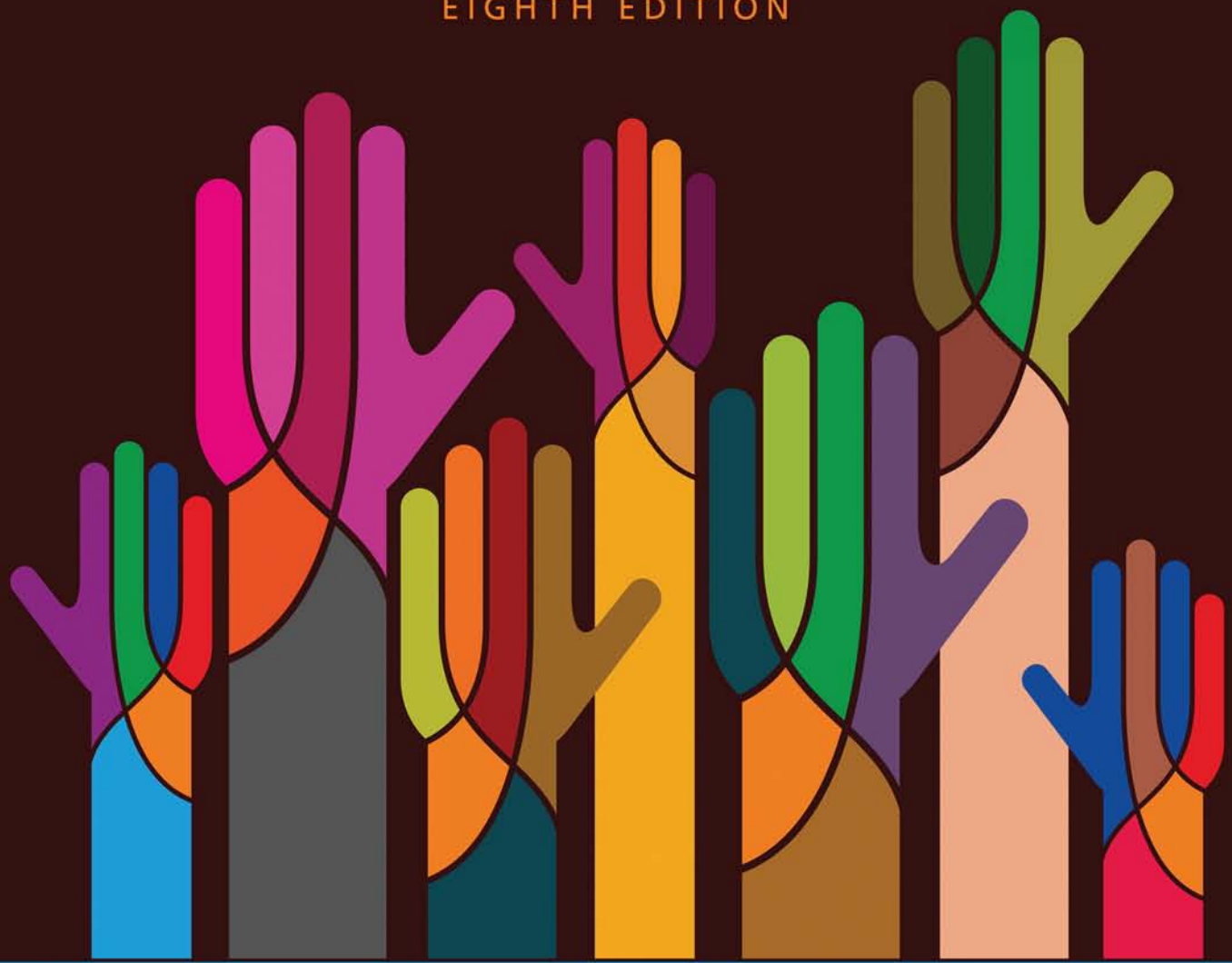
empowerment series

SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE

AN INTRODUCTION

EIGHTH EDITION



Ambrosino Ambrosino Heffernan Shuttlesworth

Brooks/Cole Empowerment Series and the Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

The Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards requires all social work students to develop ten competencies and recommends teaching and assessing 41 related practice behaviors, listed as Educational Policy (EP) 2.1.1 – 2.1.10m below. "Helping Hands" icons throughout this text, "Competency Notes" sections at the end of each chapter, and the supplemental *Practice Behaviors Workbook* connect class work to these important standards.

Competencies and Practice Behaviors

EP 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly:

a. Advocate for client access to the services of social work
b. Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development
c. Attend to professional roles and boundaries
d. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication
e. Engage in career-long learning
f. Use supervision and consultation

EP 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice:

a. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice
b. Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/ International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles
c. Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts
d. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions

EP 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments:

a. Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom
b. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation
c. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues

EP 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice:

a. Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power
b. Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups
c. Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
d. View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants

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EP 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice:

a. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
b. Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice
c. Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice

EP 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research:

a. Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
b. Use research evidence to inform practice

EP 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment:

a. Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation
b. Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment

EP 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services:

a. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being
b. Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action

EP 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice:

a. Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services
b. Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services

EP 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities:

a. Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
b. Use empathy and other interpersonal skills
c. Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes
d. Collect, organize, and interpret client data
e. Assess client strengths and limitations
f. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives
g. Select appropriate intervention strategies
h. Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals
i. Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities
j. Help clients resolve problems
k. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients
l. Facilitate transitions and endings
m. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions

For more information about the standards themselves, and for a complete policy statement, visit the Council on Social Work Education website at www.cswe.org.

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Social Work and Social Welfare
An Introduction

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Empowerment Series

Social Work and Social Welfare

An Introduction

EIGHTH EDITION

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Preface

The eighth edition of this book is written at a critical time for the United States and the entire world. The United States faces many challenges both at home and abroad. An often-debated topic is what the role of the United States should be in fostering relationships around the world as a means of promoting the social well-being of world citizens. Civil wars stemming from ethnic conflicts and the human rights violations they bring about, coupled with famines and other natural disasters, impact the United States daily. These global challenges raise critical issues regarding how to balance our need to address important domestic issues against our leadership role in an increasingly complex world.

Current domestic policy issues that cannot be ignored or swept under the rug include the state of the economy and the increasing national debt, how to successfully implement reforms in health care to best help the millions of Americans who are either uninsured or underinsured to meet their health care needs, how to reduce poverty, how to address the growing homeless population, what to do about the increasing lack of support for those who need mental health care, how to guarantee the fair and equitable treatment of the country's rapidly growing immigrant population, what commitment should be made to keeping the nation's children free from harm, how to implement and sustain juvenile and criminal justice reforms, and how to create a civil society in which *all* persons are appreciated and valued. Should we devote considerable resources to helping those who are struggling throughout the world when we can't provide well for those within our own country? What should the balance be?

At the dawn of the 20th century, the roots of social work were just beginning to take hold. It was one of the most prolific eras for social and economic justice in the history of the social work profession. The settlement house movement was in full force. Social workers (mainly women) were making significant contributions to the development of social welfare policy that affected the lives of immigrants, the poor, the homeless, delinquent youth, the medically indigent, individuals in need of mental health services, and many others. It was a time of massive social and economic change. Social workers sought to bring order out of chaos, to connect private troubles to public causes, and to help the disenfranchised create better lives for themselves. Most of all, it was a period of hope—hope for a better future for all of humanity.

The 21st century has gotten off to a rocky start. The time is more critical now than ever before for social workers to advocate for policies and programs they believe will address these issues most effectively, as well as to provide services and support to the vulnerable populations most likely to be affected by world events. This book is about the many social welfare issues facing the United States and the world today and the many roles that social work professionals play in responding to those issues.

Although approaches to social welfare have changed over the decades, the needs to which the social work profession responds remain much the same—not because the social work profession has been ineffective in addressing these needs but, rather, because the response to social welfare needs is tied closely to the prevailing social values. It can be argued that there is

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a rhythm of social responses to social welfare problems. This rhythm is affected by the events of history, the state of the economy, the prevailing political ideology, and the will of the people.

At this time in history, the social welfare needs of the United States have taken a back seat to other issues, such as waging a global war on terrorism, the spread of life-threatening infectious diseases, natural disasters across the globe, and a worldwide economic downturn. Yet the problems of poverty, homelessness, AIDS, addiction to alcohol and other drugs, child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, youth violence, immigration, and an inadequate and unjust health-care system remain and will not simply disappear by ignoring or trying to eliminate programs that try to address them. Because these problems tear at the very fabric of our society, they once again will stand high on the country's social agenda and receive the bulk of public attention.

Approach

This text takes a generalist practice perspective in addressing social welfare issues within the context of the ecological/systems framework, the overarching framework used by social workers as they intervene to address social welfare needs at the individual, family, group, organization, community, and societal levels.

Part 1 of the text, Understanding Social Work and Social Welfare, provides an introduction to the nature of social welfare and the profession of social work. In Chapter 1, we focus on the historical context of social welfare to show how the past has shaped present-day social welfare problems, the evolution of society's views of people in need, and the roles of social workers in responding to those needs. Chapter 2 explores the social work profession, contrasting social work with other helping professions and showing the importance of collaboration in working with individuals, families, groups, and communities. In Chapter 3, we introduce key underpinnings of the social work profession, including the ecological/systems framework, the concept of generalist practice, and the strengths perspective, all used by social workers in assessing client needs and working with clients and other helping professionals to develop appropriate strategies of intervention. In Chapter 4, we highlight key social justice issues such as the impact of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression on individuals and the ways the allocation of resources reinforces these forms of oppression and injustice.

In Part 2, Social Work Practice, you will develop a beginning understanding of micro- and macro-levels of practice and learn intervention methods that social workers use. In Chapter 5, you will learn about methods that social workers use in working with individuals, families, and groups. Chapter 6 focuses on social work at the macro-level, including work in the community and in policy, administration, and research.

In Part 3, Fields of Practice and Populations Served by Social Workers, you will study a number of fields of practice and populations with which social workers are involved. You will be considering the issues discussed within each chapter from the broad perspective of social welfare, the nature of the social work profession, the ecological/systems framework, and the impact of oppression and social and economic injustice on at-risk populations. Chapter 7 focuses on poverty and income assistance. Because homelessness is primarily a result of poverty and economic conditions, a discussion of homelessness is also included. Chapter 8 explores health care, including a discussion of who is more likely to be in good health and why and critical issues in current health care delivery, including implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

In Chapter 9, you will learn about mental health, alcoholism and other substance misuse, and disabilities and policies and programs intended to address impacted individuals and their families. Chapters 10 and 11 focus on needs of and services to children, youth, and families, focusing on family issues such as divorce, child maltreatment, and problems associated with adolescence, and policy and program responses to address these concerns. In Chapter 12, you will learn about the needs of and services to older adults and the critical need for social workers as our population continues to age. Chapter 13 explores the criminal justice system, including differences in the adult and juvenile justice systems. Chapter 14 focuses on social work in different environmental contexts, with a focus on rural and urban settings as well as the impact of the natural environment on vulnerable populations and the role of social workers in protecting the natural environment. Social workers increasingly must consider the impact of work on their clients, as discussed in Chapter 15. In this chapter you will also learn about social work opportunities in the workplace.

In addition, because social workers must incorporate a global worldview into their interventions wherever they practice, and because social workers are playing ever more important roles in international

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circles, discussion of international social work has been incorporated into Chapter 16. Finally, content on immigration is also included in this chapter because immigration issues are central to the social and economic future of the United States and because the 2,000-mile border shared with Mexico is a major entry point into the United States for immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America.

In keeping with the current Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, the text focuses on competencies and practice behaviors needed to be an effective social worker. "Helping hands" icons within the chapters and end-of-chapter competency notes spotlight text coverage of the required core competencies and recommended practice behaviors detailed by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) new (2008; revised 2010) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Social work graduates are expected to master these competencies and practice behaviors upon completion of their bachelor of social work (BSW) degrees or foundation coursework at the master's of social work (MSW) level. In addition, case examples throughout the text help readers understand how chapter concepts are put into action by social work practitioners.

New to the Eighth Edition

In this text we hope to help students develop a frame of reference to understand social welfare and an approach to address social issues that will serve them well in times of commitment as well as retrenchment. We have reworked much of this eighth edition to reflect changes in the social work profession, as well as in the social welfare policy arena. Content on race, gender, and sexual orientation in the chapter on social justice has been updated, and additional content added that focuses on classism, ageism, ability, and religious discrimination. The chapter on health care has been moved to an earlier place in the text to highlight the importance of the Affordable Care Act, and the chapter on mental health, substance use, and disability has been updated with new content on biological implications for understanding these issues. The chapter on rural social work has been expanded to include content on urban social work as well as the natural environment and environmental racism. Finally, content on looking to the future has been moved from the global chapter to an epilogue at the end of the text.

Features

We also have included a number of additional features to help students and instructors get the most out of the book. At the end of each chapter is a list of key terms and discussion questions that can be used in the classroom or individually to help students strengthen their critical-thinking skills. We also include a list of Internet sites by which to locate additional information on subjects of interest.

Joining a Collaborative Venture

This text is a collaborative effort among colleagues. Where consensus was possible, we sought it; where it was not possible, we sought to identify the diverse views about the established wisdom of social work. Each of us contributed to the book from the perspectives of our own education and professional experience in addition to social work: educational psychology, policy, and administration in the case of Robert Ambrosino; child development, education, human behavior, and psychology in the case of Rosalie Ambrosino; political science and economics in the case of Joe Heffernan; and sociology and history in the case of Guy Shuttlesworth. We also want to acknowledge our newest collaborator, recent BSW graduate Caitlyn Counihan, who gave us invaluable feedback throughout the revision process and served as a co-author for Chapter 9. Although the text reflects our diverse interdisciplinary perspectives, it is disciplined by the continuity and the certainty of unresolved social issues to which social work skills are relevant.

We hope that a number of you using this text will be persuaded, or have your choices reinforced, to join the social work profession. We urge those of you considering a career in social work to talk with your course instructors about getting a BSW and/or an MSW degree. We also recommend that you visit social agencies and undertake some volunteer experiences in conjunction with your course. Most important, however, we hope this book in some way contributes to your social conscience no matter what career you choose and encourages you to recognize social work as a dynamic, challenging profession whose values, principles, and practices intersect with a wide variety of other professions.

As we continue to struggle with social welfare issues that have existed in various forms for centuries, we urge you to look back on the early roots of social work—to

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remember the profession's significant contributions to making the world a better place to live. We urge you to build on the many accomplishments of the social work profession that took root at the turn of the last century and to translate what was learned there into the very different and ever-changing world of today. We urge you to rekindle the flame of hope that burned so brightly in those early days of the profession. We urge you to seek to advance what the social work profession stands for in everything you do. Finally, regardless of what profession you choose, we urge you to leave a legacy, no matter how large or small, for others who will follow you into the future to build on to continue to make the world a better place to live.

Rosalie Ambrosino
Robert Ambrosino
Joe Heffernan
Guy Shuttlesworth

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Four "referent" groups played an important role in strengthening this book: our families, our students and faculty colleagues in Austin and San Antonio, and our colleagues in the profession. We owe our gratitude to our families—Megan, Will A., Chris, Will C., Catie, Coleman, and Jimmy for their support and understanding when the book took priority over them. A special note of thanks goes to our children and grandchildren who have enriched our lives immeasurably with their open minds and zest for life—and ultimately for whom this book was written, as they are the inheritors of the world we leave behind.

We also thank the diverse group of reviewers whose comments contributed significantly to the quality of this eighth edition:

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We very much appreciate the thoughtful guidance they provided in our making revisions for the eighth edition.

The referent group of greatest relevance has been our students. We owe special appreciation to them for helping us frame the issues in the text by asking the "hard questions" and challenging us to remember that social welfare issues are timeless and complex. Their comments in classes over our collective years of teaching have helped to shape our views of what they want and need to know to become better social workers and citizens in our complex society. The most rewarding part of teaching is watching our students begin to see connections between the past and the present, as well as the many complex factors that shape social welfare issues and their impact on the diverse populations within the United States. We have incorporated many of their ideas into this eighth edition.

Last but not least, we express our gratitude to our acquisition editor, Gordon Lee, for his persistence and encouragement in the book preparation and publication. Also, a special thanks to the production guidance and abilities—and the patience—of Ted Knight, Sharib Asrar, and all others who helped with this publication along the way.

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PART 1

Understanding Social Work and Social Welfare

Key Concepts and Perspectives

AP Photo/The Times Argus, Jeb Wallace-Brodeur

Part 1 of this book is an introduction to the nature of social welfare and social work—what social welfare encompasses and what social workers who function in social welfare settings do. The information in these four chapters constitutes an historical and theoretical framework for understanding subsequent chapters.

Chapter 1, Social Welfare, Past and Present, provides the historical context of social welfare—how the past has shaped present-day social welfare problems and society's views toward people in need. The chapter begins with a discussion of early welfare policies and legislation and traces these influences to contemporary social welfare institutions.

Chapter 2, Social Work and Other Helping Professions, explores the relationships between social welfare as a broad system intended to maintain the well-being of individuals within a society and the profession of social work. The discussion covers the diverse roles and functions of social work professionals, contrasting the profession of social work with other helping professions and examining ways in which they can work together. For those who are interested in careers in one of the helping

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professions, the chapter indicates educational pathways and credentialing for various roles.

Chapter 3, The Ecological/Systems Perspective, suggests a theoretical framework for understanding subsequent chapters. An ecological/systems perspective is the basis for considering individuals within the broader environment. This framework encompasses a broad societal perspective, a community perspective, a family perspective, and an individual perspective. Examples are provided to show how social work practitioners apply the framework and its concepts. The chapter also covers generalist social work practice and the strengths perspective, explaining how these perspectives fit within an ecological/systems context.

Chapter 4, Diversity and Social Justice, addresses the ways in which racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression and discrimination disenfranchise vulnerable groups in our society. Specific examples illustrate the long-range effects of social injustice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, and societal levels related to color, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, ability, and religion. The promotion of social and economic justice and work toward eliminating oppression at all levels of the environment are implicit roles of the social work profession.

Together, these chapters comprise an overview of the major concepts upon which the profession of social work is based, and they lay the groundwork for the remaining chapters. Concepts introduced in these chapters also provide the foundation for understanding content in later chapters. For those majoring in social work, these concepts and their application will become second nature. You will use them daily, probably without even realizing it.

The focus of these chapters is on those competencies and practice behaviors needed to become a social worker that relate to: (1) identifying as a professional social worker, (2) developing a beginning understanding of the ethical principles that guide social work practice, (3) becoming aware of the links between diversity and social and economic justice, and (4) understanding how history has shaped U.S. social welfare policy and services provided by social workers.

As you read the chapters in this section and engage in classroom discussions about the material, note that from the beginning of time, our society has been shaped by the discussion of conflicting ideas. These initial chapters present multiple perspectives about many social welfare issues—for example, poverty and welfare reform, diversity, reproductive rights of women, and same-sex marriage. You also will find that social workers have multiple perspectives about these issues. Social work is a diverse profession, and like members of the broader society, social workers do not always agree on the ways these issues are framed and the best approaches to address them. We hope that you will consider the ideas presented in this text and those of your student colleagues and your professor—and listen to these different voices with an open mind. More important, we hope that you will treat clients you serve with dignity and respect, even though their values and other perspectives may differ from yours.

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CHAPTER 1

Social Welfare, Past and Present

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Consider what your life would be like if you were living in an earlier time or at a future time. What would be the same? What would be different? Why? How would personal and religious values and beliefs of the time, the economy, and the group in power shape your life and the choices available to you? Have you ever thought about how the personal and religious values and beliefs, the economy, and groups in power in earlier years of the United States impact your life now and the choices available to you?

Social welfare policy in the United States has undergone tremendous change since the time of the early settlers. Yet, much of social welfare as we know it today reflects the mainstream belief system in place during colonial American times—a system borrowed from Elizabethan England—which in turn largely reflects the English Poor Laws of the early 1600s. Many of the provisions of the English Poor Laws—such as an emphasis on personal responsibility, local control over decision making, promotion of family values, limited government involvement in social welfare programs, the equating of work to religious salvation, and a distinction between the "deserving" poor and the "undeserving" poor—are embedded in contemporary social welfare policies.

The landmark welfare reform legislation passed in 1996 and reauthorized as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 with even more stringent provisions created a burgeoning underclass of working poor. In spite of the fact that many Americans still cannot find sustainable employment since the economic downturn of 2007, it is unlikely that Congress will ease up on welfare eligibility requirements or increase funding to states for welfare benefits, which have been flat for 16 years (Shott & Pavetti, 2013). Implementation of the Affordable Care Act, stabilizing the economy, extending unemployment benefits for millions of Americans who are unable to find employment following the economic downturn of 2007, and reducing the federal debt have taken priority over further welfare reform in recent years.

For many, working at a job, even two jobs, no longer guarantees a life free from poverty and even a small share of the American dream. Can this trend be reversed, or is the fundamental belief system about social welfare in the United States so entrenched that limited incremental change is the best we can expect? What lessons can be learned from the American social welfare experience? What are the implications of failing to meet the basic needs of a large segment

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of the population? Resolving these and similar questions is central to the social work profession. Failing to resolve them is simply not an option.

There is no consensus regarding the nature, focus, and development of social policy or the responsibility—if any—of government in developing programs to assist those in need. In the following discussion, we identify some of the more salient factors involved in developing a comprehensive approach to social welfare in the United States. But first, a few basic questions are in order: What is social welfare? Who gets it? Who pays for it? Does it create dependency? Why is our social welfare system organized as it is?

Social welfare in our society has long been a matter of dispute and controversy. Often, the controversy results from a misunderstanding of the policies that govern social welfare, as well as misinformation about people who should receive social welfare benefits. Many people view those who receive public assistance (commonly called "welfare") as lazy, unwilling to work, and content to live off government aid. This perspective presumes that poverty, mental illness, and unemployment signify personal failure. Others view recipients of public assistance as victims of a rapidly changing society that provides little help in enabling people to become self-sufficient. It is understandable, then, that people with divergent views would have different opinions about the nature and scope of social welfare programs and the people they serve.

Determining who is in need represents one of the fundamental decisions involved in developing any public social welfare program. This judgment is almost always based, at least in part, on how much we think a person deserves help. Frequently, a distinction is made between the deserving poor and the undeserving poor. Many people are more accepting of the needs of older people and those with disabilities and chronic illnesses (deserving poor) than of the needs of seemingly able-bodied persons (undeserving poor).

Today, the term "deserving" is defined more often than not by whether the person is able to work. Many times, we assume that people who are poor have chosen that lifestyle, are lazy, or lack motivation to rise out of poverty. Stereotypes such as these fail to consider how changing social systems contribute to outcomes that result in poverty for a substantial portion of the population. Increasingly, even those who work at two or more jobs can be poor.

Why does poverty in the United States persist? What can and should be done about it, and who should be responsible for addressing the problem? What resources should be brought to bear, and who should pay for them?

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A Definition of Social Welfare and Its Relationship to Social Work

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What is social welfare? Although social welfare is viewed by many as services provided to the poor, government expenditures and tax breaks for members of the upper and middle classes could also be included (Gilbert & Terrell, 2012; Jansson, 2012). In fact, the term *welfare* is derived from the phrase "getting farewell," which means to travel, to go, and to be well (Midgley & Livermore, 2008). A broad definition of social welfare could incorporate all organized societal responses that promote the social well-being of a population: education, health, rehabilitation, protective services for adults and children, public assistance, social insurance, services for those with physical and mental disabilities, job-training programs, marriage counseling, psychotherapy, pregnancy counseling, adoption, and numerous other related activities designed to promote social well-being. In short, social welfare incorporates what is needed to provide people with resources to lead satisfying and productive lives (Day & Schiele, 2012; Karger & Stoesz, 2013; Stern & Axinn, 2012).

The term **social welfare**, then, refers to the full range of organized activities of public and voluntary agencies that seek to prevent, alleviate or contribute to solving a selected set of social problems. For some who view social welfare broadly—from the concept that a society pools its resources for the general welfare of all—it encompasses public facilities such as libraries, public parks, and hospitals. Others include social support to corporations, sometimes called "corporate welfare," or the extensive investment that some countries such as the United States make in businesses in addition to investment in people in need. Still others view social welfare more narrowly, to consist of programs that address issues such as poverty and child maltreatment.

The length and breadth of the list of social problems typically depend on the values perspective of the person compiling the list, the historical time in which the list is developed, and the perceived economic resources available to meet the social welfare problems listed. As you read on, consider how individual and professional values shape one's views about what constitutes social welfare.

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Social work is the primary profession that works within the social welfare system and with those the system serves. Social workers implement planned social change activities prescribed by social welfare institutions. They facilitate change by working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and at the societal level to improve social functioning. Social workers advocate for social and economic justice within the social welfare system, making needed resources available to members of vulnerable populations—children, elderly people, those with disabilities, and those living in poverty (Dubois & Miley, 2013).

Social workers within the social welfare system assist abused and neglected children and their families, pregnant and parenting teens, the homeless and others living in poverty, individuals with health and mental health problems, youth and adults within the criminal justice system, employees in the workplace, refugees across the world, and individuals with a multitude of other needs. They organize neighborhoods and communities to strengthen or create programs and policies to better meet human needs and advocate for change in a variety of roles at state, national, and global levels. Individuals involved in other helping professions work closely with social workers in planned change at all levels. The roles of social work professionals and other helping professions in the social welfare system are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Value Base of Social Welfare

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Values are assumptions, convictions, or beliefs about what is good and desirable or the way things ought to be. A person's values are shaped by her or his socialization experiences. Many values are dominant and supported by the majority of the population (Reamer, 2013). For example, most people agree that life is sacred. Nearly everyone believes that killing another person with wanton disregard for that person's life is a criminal offense. Other values related to the sanctity of life, however, are not shared so readily. For example, our society differs on issues such as abortion, physician-assisted suicide, and capital punishment.

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The development of social welfare over time reflects differences in values as they relate to social responsibility for those in need. Values alone, however, do not determine social policy. Availability of resources, coupled with economic, religious, and political influences, results in ever-evolving policies of social responsibility for vulnerable members of a society.

One dominant value that has guided the development of our social welfare system is **humanitarianism**, derived largely from Judeo-Christian philosophy and teachings (Day & Schiele, 2012). Our society also is influenced by the economic doctrine of **laissez-faire**, based on limited government involvement, individualism, and personal responsibility (Stern & Axinn, 2012). From a laissez-faire perspective,

1. problems of the poor and the disenfranchised are perceived as a matter of personal failure that government welfare programs would only perpetuate,
2. work is considered to be the only justifiable means of survival because it contributes to the productive effort of society, and
3. social responsibility for vulnerable members of society would be carried out through volunteerism aimed at encouraging personal responsibility and self-sufficiency rather than formal government intervention.

A different perspective maintains that we all are members of society and, by virtue of that membership, are entitled to share in its productive effort. Those who hold this belief argue that people become poor or needy as a result of changing social institutions such as economic globalization or the shift from a manufacturing economy to a service-based economy. Individuals are not the cause of these conditions but, rather, are swept along and victimized by them. For example, members of some ethnic groups face barriers such as inferior educational resources, limited (and usually menial) job opportunities, poor housing, and inadequate health resources. An analysis from this perspective would not blame these conditions on individual group members but, instead, identify factors such as institutional discrimination and oppression.

Those who conceptualize social welfare have differing values perspectives. Some focus on whether one's view is liberal or conservative or on a continuum somewhere in between. From a conservative perspective, individuals are responsible for taking care of themselves, with little or no government intervention. This perspective suggests that government should provide a safety net only for those with the greatest need. From the liberal perspective, government is responsible for ensuring the availability of social and economic structures, including equitable access to support for those who cannot meet their own needs (Karger & Stoesz, 2013).

Another perspective contrasts residual and institutional social welfare. The residual perspective views social welfare as serving only those with the most problems or greatest needs. This perspective often is associated with a values system that supports individualism and an expectation that people can, and should, take care of themselves and that those who are unable to care for themselves are deficient in some way. In contrast, an institutional perspective holds that everyone has needs throughout the life cycle and that society is responsible for supporting those needs by providing services and benefits (Dinitto & Johnson, 2012).

Thus, perspectives regarding societal responsibility for vulnerable members of society vary widely. As you follow the discussion of historical influences that have converged to shape our present social welfare structure, see whether you can identify the values positions that have contributed to the formulation of social policy.

Historical Influences That Shape Social Welfare Today

Our English Heritage

In England, before mercantilism, care for the poor was a function primarily of the Church. By extending themselves through charitable efforts to those in need, parishioners fulfilled a required sacred function. The Church's resources usually were sufficient to provide the relief that was made available to the poor.

The feudal system itself provided a structure that met the needs of most of the population. The only significant government legislation during this time was passed as a result of the Black Death—bubonic plague—which began in 1348 and killed approximately two-thirds of the English population within 2 years. In 1351, King Edward III mandated the Statute of Laborers Act, which required all able-bodied individuals to accept any type of employment within their parish. Furthermore, it laid the groundwork for residency requirements by forbidding able-bodied persons

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from leaving their parish. (This later became an intrinsic part of American social welfare legislation.)

Some 150 years later, with the breakdown of the feudal system and the division of the Church during the Reformation, organized religious efforts could no longer cope with the increasing needs of the poor. Without the Church or the feudal manor to rely on in times of need, the poor were left to fend for themselves. This change frequently led to malnutrition, transience, poor health, broken families, and even death.

As Europe struggled with the transition from an agricultural society to an industrial one, the numbers of dislodged persons increased. Many of the poor found their way into cities, lured by the prospect of work in manufacturing facilities. The Industrial Revolution, however, was still in its early stages, and the number of jobs was insufficient to accommodate the growing population. Further, most of those who were seeking jobs were illiterate and lacked the skills necessary to work in a manufacturing environment. Turned away by the cities, large bands of poor, unemployed people wandered the countryside begging for whatever meager assistance they could get. A sense of lawlessness often accompanied them. Local officials were pressed to find suitable solutions for the homeless, the poor, and dependent children. Unable to address the problems on their own, local officials turned to Parliament for a solution (Stern & Axinn, 2012).

Parliament responded by passing the **Elizabethan Poor Law** (Elizabeth 43) in 1601. This legislation is significant because it attempted to codify earlier legislation as well as establish a national policy regarding the poor (Lees, 2007). The Elizabethan Poor Law delineated "categories" of assistance, a practice retained in our current social welfare legislation.

1. *Individuals considered to be "worthy."* These were individuals for whom impoverishment was not viewed as a fraudulent attempt to secure assistance. They included the aged, the chronically ill, individuals with disabilities, and orphaned children. The worthy poor typically were placed in almshouses (poorhouses), where they received minimal care. This practice was called "indoor relief" because it provided services to the poor within institutions. In some instances, children were placed with families and often were required to work for their keep.
2. *The able-bodied poor.* For those classified in this way, programs were less humane. Some of the able-bodied were placed in prisons, others were sent to workhouses, and still others served as indentured servants in local factories or as slave laborers on local farms. Unlike the worthy poor, the able-bodied poor were assumed to be malingerers who lacked the motivation to secure gainful employment. The treatment they received was designed to deter others from following in their footsteps, as well as to punish them for their transience and idleness.

The Elizabethan Poor Law was enacted primarily to standardize the way the poor were to be managed, not because of altruism and concern for them (Lees, 2007). This law is significant because it established the guiding philosophy of public assistance legislation in England until 1834 and in the United States until the Social Security Act was passed in 1935 (Jansson, 2012). Its influence also can be seen in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (commonly called "welfare reform"). The important components of the Elizabethan Poor Law (Day & Schiele, 2012) in relation to U.S. policies toward the poor are the establishment of:

- clear (but limited) government responsibility for those in need,
- government authority to force people to work,
- government enforcement of family responsibility,
- the principle of local responsibility, and
- strict residence requirements.

More than 200 years after the passage of the Elizabethan Poor Law, the Poor Law Reform Act of 1834 was passed in reaction to concerns that the earlier law was not being implemented as intended. The prevailing belief then was that liberalized supervision of the programs for the poor had served as a disincentive for work and, in effect, had created dependency on the program. The Poor Law Reform Act mandated that all forms of outdoor relief (assistance to people in their homes) be abolished and that the full intention of the provisions of the Poor Law of 1601 be rigidly enforced. Furthermore, the act established the "principle of least eligibility," which prescribed that no assistance be provided in an amount that left the recipient better off than the lowest-paid worker (Lees, 2007). This principle also served as a basic tenet of early American social welfare legislation and public welfare programs today.

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The social welfare system in the United States has in many cases actually harmed rather than improved the lives of the people it was intended to serve (e.g., women, people of color, the elderly, persons who are mentally ill, persons who are homeless, immigrants, and other populations that are not part of the dominant group). In addition, because the focus is often exclusively on the problems these groups face, the assets they could contribute are often ignored (Jansson, 2012).

Social Welfare in Colonial America

Early American settlers brought a religious heritage that emphasized charity and the mutual interdependence of people. They also brought with them the heritage of the Elizabethan Poor Law. America in colonial times was an undeveloped and often hostile land that required early settlers to work hard to survive. The country had no formal government network for providing any significant assistance. Those in need were aided by their neighbors or by members of religious organizations. As the population increased, many colonies passed laws requiring new arrivals to demonstrate their ability to sustain themselves or, in the absence of such ability, locate sponsors who were willing to pledge their support for them. For the most part, transients were "warned out" and returned to their place of residence or back to England (Stern & Axinn, 2012). Times were difficult, the Puritan work ethic was embedded deeply, and little surplus was available to distribute to those in need. The names of habitual paupers were posted routinely at the townhouse in many towns and villages. Women during this time were considered to be the property of their husbands, and were accorded few legal protections against cruelty, lack of support, or desertion. They were largely uneducated and had limited social and economic roles. They could not own land and were not allowed to work outside the home unless they were poor, in which case they were forced to work in almshouses or workhouses to obtain the meager resources provided to them (Shiele & Day, 2012).

Because much of colonial America was based on a feudal system, with indentured servants in the mid-colonies (more than half of all colonists came to this country as indentured servants) and slavery in the southern colonies, the pauper class clearly lacked freedom. Often overlooked, however, was a set of harsh laws—reasonably enforced up until the time of independence—requiring masters to meet the basic survival needs of servants and slaves. Ironically, in the transition from a plantation to a pre-industrial economy, economic uncertainty also increased. Consequently, public relief was the largest expenditure in the public budgets of most major cities at the time of the American Revolution (Stern & Axinn, 2012).

The rigid restraint of the Poor Law philosophy was consistent with the extreme scarcity in the colonial economy. Colonial law stressed **indoor relief**, placing those who could not care for themselves in settings other than their own homes. Although the intent may have been to provide care in the homes of others, usually in exchange for work as in the case of indentured servants, in effect, the truly poor (paupers) often were segregated within almshouses as punishment for being poor and were given tasks that at least paid for their meager keep. The apprenticeship of children reflected a belief in family controls for children and emphasized work and training for productive employment. Also, the deification of the work ethic and the belief that pauperism was a visible symbol of sin permitted a harsh response to those in need as a means of saving their souls.

Changing Patterns After the Revolution

Between the time of the American Revolution and the Civil War, several broad patterns of welfare emerged, all of which were consistent with the basic tenets of the Elizabethan Poor Law. The American doctrine of separation of church and state forced the connection between parish and local welfare office to be severed. Nevertheless, most states retained a religious connection, with the requirement that at least one member of the welfare board be a "licensed preacher." Local governments accepted grudgingly the role of welfare caretaker and adopted rigid residency requirements.

The most important shift in this period was from indoor relief to **outdoor relief**—providing cash assistance that allowed individuals to remain in their own homes. Outdoor aid, with its reliance on in-kind aid and work-relief projects, was more adaptable to the volatile economics of the first half of the 19th century.

Another significant movement during this period was the shift away from public-sector to private-sector welfare. The responsibility for welfare, therefore, was left to charitable institutions rather than remaining a public concern.

It is interesting to note that references to women were conspicuously absent from the Declaration of

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Independence. The rights and protections guaranteed by the Constitution were considered by most to be exclusively the purview of males. Women's right to vote would not be incorporated into the Constitution until a much later time. Also, the seeds for the enslavement of nearly one million Africans were sown during early colonial times, due in large part to the need to support the burgeoning agrarian economy of the south. While the Emancipation Proclamation officially ended the practice of slavery, one could argue that the legacy of those dark days has lingered throughout American history, as evidenced by the continued oppression of African Americans and the roles that they play in society.

Caring for the Urban Poor

As the new nation grew, cities began to appear on the Eastern Seaboard. The immigrants who arrived regularly often had difficulty finding jobs that paid a living wage, and a large population of displaced poor began to emerge. People who were interested in the welfare of these individuals sought avenues for meeting their needs. Attaching the poor to subsistence-level employment usually was the goal, but concern arose over meeting their basic needs until they could derive income through employment. While almshouses often were used to care for the chronic poor, outdoor relief was increasingly accepted as a suitable way to care for the poor.

Before moving to a discussion of early organizations that emerged to address the needs of the rapidly-growing urban poor, it is important to point out that the majority of those efforts were funded by wealthy philanthropists and well-to-do workers (mostly women) who imposed their values on those they served, with little attention to their cultural norms, practices, and traditions. The informal, and often intricate, support networks that once flourished among the struggling immigrants gave way to formal services, albeit limited in supply, and thus, a "we know best" philosophy of services was born (Katz, 2013).

One of the earliest organizations to seek a formal solution to the problems of poverty was the New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, established in 1817. Following the precedent established by Thomas Chalmers in England, the society divided the city into districts and assigned "friendly visitors" to work in each district to assess and respond to the needs of the poor (Stern & Axinn, 2012). In 1843, the Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor was established in New York City to coordinate relief efforts for the unemployed. One significant technique the association introduced—and which the social work profession widely practices today—was the requirement that relief could not be dispensed until the individual's needs were assessed so that agencies providing relief could do so more effectively.

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Perhaps the most effective relief organization for the poor was the Charity Organization Society (COS) of Buffalo, New York, a private organization modeled after the COS in London. The COS sought to infuse efficiency and economy into programs serving the poor, as well as to organize charities in an effort to prevent duplication of services and reduce dependency on charitable efforts (Stern & Axinn, 2012). Like the Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor that preceded it, the COS emphasized the necessity of assessing the conditions of the poor and added the dimension of engaging "friendly visitors" with clients in an effort to guide, rehabilitate, and help prepare for self-sufficiency. The COS had little sympathy for chronic beggars, viewing them essentially as hopeless derelicts. Some would argue that this practice spelled the beginnings of the marginalization of homeless individuals that has permeated American history to the present time (Jansson, 2012).

Caring for Specific Populations

Many other private charities emerged during the 1800s to address special problem areas such as care of orphan children, and those who were mentally ill or had visual or hearing impairments (referred to as "blind" or "deaf" at that time). For the most part, these services were sponsored by state or local governments and provided largely in institutional settings that were physically removed from the community. A growing number of socially active citizens expressed grave concern over the treatment that residents of these institutions received (Stern & Axinn, 2012).

Dorothea Dix, a philanthropist and social reformer, traveled throughout the United States observing the care given to the "insane" and was appalled by what she saw. She sought to convince President Franklin Pierce to allocate federal and land-grant monies for establishing federal institutions to care for individuals

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