

## ADVANCED SPECIALIZATION COPA FIELD EDUCATION COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

The Advanced COPA: Communities, Organizations, Policy, & Advocacy year field education is designed to help students develop competence in community practice, planning, and program development, including knowledge, skill, and values in mobilizing people and resources to solve social problems and improve the quality of life at the community level. Students build on Generalist practice skills in working with individuals and groups toward developing the capacity of communities to address individual, family, and community issues, as well as broader social needs. Student work focuses on role development and conscious use of self, along with skill in methods of achieving social change goals at the grassroots, coalition, or advocacy/policy levels, depending on the field setting.

### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Macro social workers demonstrate the capacity, integrity, and commitment to act in an ethical manner that promotes inclusive participation in decision making, public policy, and community building. They ensure that practice in complex systems respects every individual's and community's right to human dignity and worth by opposing sources and structures of racism and other forms of oppression. Macro practitioners are facilitative leaders and organizers across all realms of practice and maintain a commitment to a vision and mission that supports the collective process of social change. To ensure ethical practice with communities, with organizations, and in the policy arena, these social workers use self-reflection, self-regulation, supervision, consultation, and lifelong learning to address how their attitudes and biases influence their personal and professional identity, values, and behaviors. Social workers in macro practice represent the profession's values in interactions with clients, interprofessional colleagues, policymakers, and community stakeholders. They understand and promote organizational, community, and individual rights regarding policy, political activity, and other forms of social action. Macro practitioners recognize ethical issues in practice and distinguish between decision-making frameworks to navigate ethical dilemmas between their personal values, their identity, values of the profession, and the values, interests, and rights of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.



globally. Macro social workers recognize historical legacies of oppression and discrimination and challenge social policies and practices that tolerate or promote racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other discriminatory treatments of people based on identities including age, disability, religion, and national origin. They understand that the realization of human rights is mediated and influenced by local, state, federal, and international policies. Macro social workers design and advance public policies using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees all people the right to work, housing, healthcare, education, leisure, privacy, economic security, and a clean, safe, and sustainable environment. They promote the right to vote, the right to protest, and other forms of civic participation to engage in democratic processes fully and freely.

At the completion of the advanced specialization year, the student is able to demonstrate the following:

- 3.1 Identify issues, develop strategies, evaluate outcomes, and promote human rights and social justice with affected clients and constituencies.
- 3.2 Analyze and participate in the political process and political climate when engaging in organizational, community, and policy change on behalf of human rights and social justice.
- 3.3 Identify and engage key stakeholders to advocate for access to resources, services, benefits, and opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized clients, constituencies, and communities.

**Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice.**

Macro practitioners recognize environmental, sociocultural, and historical factors that affect the inclusion of underrepresented populations in research and understand how this research enhances service delivery and contributes to broader knowledge building within social work practice. In collaboration with key program stakeholders and those directly affected by social problems, macro practitioners build culturally informed knowledge to promote human rights and social justice for vulnerable and oppressed populations. Macro social workers understand that many types of evidence, from personal narrative to analysis of large data sets, inform the development, analysis, and critique of social policies and interventions. They use a wide range of research methods, including logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches, to develop effective responses to social, economic, political, and environmental challenges and to shape policies and programs. They recognize that research is not value free and that biases can skew programs and policies. They communicate research-based arguments to inform policies and programs and translate research findings into actionable planned change efforts and policies.

the dissemination of research findings to improve policies, programs, services, and interventions.

- 4.3 Identify anticipated obstacles and opposition to the conduct and dissemination of research, including ethical, political, and economic dilemmas.

**Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice.**

Social workers in macro practice examine how historical, political, social, economic, and cultural factors shape the policy environment and use this knowledge to recognize and capitalize on opportunities for reform that advance human rights; racial and gender equity; access to high-quality, comprehensive social welfare services; and social, economic, and environmental justice. Macro practitioners appreciate the complexity of policy issues; understand legislative, executive, and judicial policy-making processes; and critically analyze the varied dimensions of power as they affect individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Macro practitioners engage in policy research, development, advocacy, analysis, implementation, evaluation, and electoral politics. They devise and implement strategies at the local, state, and national levels to





social, political, and economic justice, sustainable and accessible services and programs, and evidence-based practice. Macro social workers ensure that evaluation design, measurement, implementation, and use of findings are customized to the target population and diverse settings and that they are culturally responsive, accurate, and timely. They recognize that evaluation is a complex activity that does not occur in a vacuum and that factors such as measurement issues, multiple goals, and changing systemic contexts contribute to success or failure. They strive to include the perspectives, input, and participation of stakeholders and community members throughout the evaluation process.

At the completion of the advanced specialization year, the student is able to demonstrate the following: