FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 8, 2018

# ​ University of Maryland School of Social Work Launches New Financial Social Work Certificate Program

The [University of Maryland School of Social Work (UMSSW)](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/)’s [Financial Social Work Initiative (FSWI)](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/fsw/) is launching a [Financial Social Work (FSW) Certificate Program](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/media/ssw/fsw/FSWI_FSWcertificateProgram-(FINAL).pdf) through UMSSW’s [Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Office](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/cpe/) in March 2018 with an incoming class of nearly 30 attendees.

The new Certificate Program will meet an identified need for greater financial capability and empowerment knowledge on the part of social workers, who also seek skill-building strategies to enable them to intervene more effectively with financially distressed individuals, families, and communities. The FSW Certificate Program is geared towards social workers who practice in non-profit and other social service agencies, as well as in schools, medical settings, justice and court settings, private practice, and beyond.

The FSW Certificate Program is designed to help social workers to have more sophisticated knowledge about financial issues experienced in daily life, such as credit, debt, budgeting, and working towards financial goals. Those who work with clients on their complex financial struggles and witness how these intersect with other psychosocial stressors must be knowledgeable about and familiar with financial issues and feel comfortable in addressing these directly and effectively with people and communities they serve, according to FSWI’s mission. Social workers must also be well versed in historical and current financial policy issues that influence and affect people’s paths towards greater financial stability; conversely, those policies that hinder financial stability and/or that perpetuate economic injustice must also be understood. The FSW Certificate Program will equip social workers with skills to be powerful change agents and advocates within their communities of practice.

The Certificate Program consists of seven in-person sessions spanning from March to November 2018 to be held at the School of Social Work in Baltimore. Key educators and guest speakers will foster rich classroom discussion and learning.

The Financial Social Work Initiative received a $100,000 grant from the Woodside Foundation. Part of that will support development of the FSW Certificate Program. The FSWI also received a $23,600 grant from the Calvin K. Kazanjian Economics Foundation, Inc., dedicated to Certificate Program development and programming. Finally, OneMain Financial contributed $3,000 toward the FSW Certificate Program.

“The Financial Social Work Certificate Program is a breakthrough program that will help advance the skills and effectiveness of those who participate and further the achievement of the Grand Challenges for Social Work’s goal of ‘Building Financial Capability for All,’” said UMSSW Dean Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW. “This Certificate Program shows, once again, that the University of Maryland School of Social Work is providing unique learning opportunities.”

Meg Woodside, MSW ‘07, trustee of the Woodside Foundation, and FSWI’s co-founder added, “The launch of this new Certificate Program as part of the 10th anniversary of the Financial Social Work Initiative has been highly anticipated. It is the culmination of FSWI’s decade of leadership in the field of financial social work and will be a comprehensive resource for social workers seeking to improve family and community economic issues.”

Added Michael MacDowell, the Calvin K. Kazanjian Economics Foundation’s managing director, “We see social workers as having an immediate impact on improving the financial well being of their clients. The foundation applauds the work at the University of Maryland's School of Social Work and its innovative new Certificate Program. We are pleased to be part of this important undertaking.”

For more information on the FSW Certificate Program and other activities of UMSSW’s Financial Social Work Initiative, please visit [www.ssw.umaryland.edu/fsw](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/fsw).

*###*