



Proposal Guidelines

The Grand Challenges for Social Work (GCSW) is excited to announce its efforts to **Go•Grander**, an opportunity to expand the initiative by providing a platform for new voices to create a bigger impact in our field and in our society.

Introduction

The [Grand Challenges for Social Work](#) (GCSW) is a groundbreaking initiative to champion social progress powered by science. It's a call to action for social work researchers and practitioners to: harness social work's science and knowledge base; collaborate with individuals, community-based organizations, and professionals from all fields and disciplines; and work together to tackle some of our toughest social problems.

After launching in 2016, the initiative has seen great achievements in the existing thirteen Grand Challenge networks and is excited to encourage new directions and progress for the field.

Purpose

Go•Grander will initiate a process by which new issue areas can become Grand Challenges, new working papers can expand the existing Grand Challenges, and new partners and stakeholders can engage with the initiative's efforts in new ways.

The initial launch of the GCSW followed the process of similar initiatives led by the field of engineering and others. A call for papers was distributed and those that were received were reviewed using a clear set of criteria (outlined below with additional criteria) to select an optimum number of challenges for our field to focus on for the next ten years.

After six years, the initiative is excited to re-open the call for papers to welcome additional challenge areas. The GCSW is seeking proposals for additional innovative approaches to advance the scientific and organizational power of social work to tackle society's greatest challenges.

Timeline and Key Dates

Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis beginning June 1, 2023. New networks, papers, and working groups will be announced on a rolling basis.

Application Process Summary

- Submit your proposal and any accompanying materials [here](#).
 - Your submission will be reviewed by the Go Grander Committee and the GCSW Leadership Board for initial review. They will engage additional representative of the practice and service recipient communities, as necessitated. The Leadership Board will make recommendations to the Executive Committee for final determination.
 - Within 60 days, Kira Silk, Director of the Grand Challenges for Social Work, will communicate the decision and, as needed, initiate a discussion about potential next steps with the identified contact person(s) listed on your submission.

**Note: If selected as a new Grand Challenge, contact persons should be prepared to identify Network Leads to advance the work, including providing updates and items for the monthly GCSW [newsletter](#) and participating in quarterly meetings (virtually with one in-person option).*

Submit your proposal [here](#)!

The committee considers the following criteria in evaluating each proposal:

Criterion 1: Challenge must be big, important, compelling. Proposals should improve social welfare, social justice, and equality of opportunity in the larger society. Grand Challenges that address large-scale systems problems are likely to have deeply entrenched constituencies, require bold solutions that exceed current capacity, and may require untried ideas as the foundation for action. We are looking for challenges that the general public would immediately recognize as deeply important and vital to our social growth as a nation. A critical aspect of importance is the likely impact on improving society's racial, ethnic and gender inequities in alignment with the [Grand Challenges for Social Work: Vision, Mission, Domain, Guiding Principles, & Guideposts to Action](#).

Criterion 2: Challenge must address ongoing societal inequities. Proposals should address ways that the work will address continuing oppression and how the challenge will address the differential needs of oppressed populations and help reduce reduction of the harmful results of discrimination and oppression. The review of what social work has done to address inequities should also be included, as merited.

Criterion 3: Challenge must be amenable to analysis, assessment, and improvement. The path to addressing challenges at the systems level must expand the boundaries of inquiry and development as we know them or use models of investigation suited to large-scale social or technological processes. Examples are vastly different systemic approaches to reducing child and family violence or addressing disability or the use of big data, predictive analytics, or social media to understand pressing social problems. Initial explorations and analytic methods may be critical in establishing the basis for more effective future problem-solving in cases where the scale or other properties of the challenge are unprecedented or other approaches have failed. Approaches to problem formulation and analysis may include a study of history, organization case studies, local "pilot" experiences, information from administrative databases, first and second person accounts, beta-testing in industry, and so forth, as well as more conventional scientific sources of evidence and knowledge. Part of the challenge may be to successfully complete an analysis that will overcome remaining puzzles in understanding the problem or in crafting an effective solution.

Criterion 3: Examples of demonstrable progress to address the challenge can be made in a decade. Grand Challenges, while big, important, and compelling, must also be amenable to assessment and some evidence of progress. This should include a brief description of what social work has previously done to address this challenge. Concept papers should include identification of indicators that will be used to measure or identify improvement. For those challenges which are universal or large scale in character, some impact on problem components or localized successes should be expected within a decade. It is also understood that challenges that involve reframing of professional roles, groundbreaking invention, or unprecedented social innovation, the scale of success will be more limited and the acceptable horizon for change more distant.

Criterion 4: The challenge is best addressed with cross-sector, interdisciplinary, and interprofessional collaboration that is community engaged. When large scale and unprecedented change is proposed by any Grand Challenge, of necessity it will demand collaboration across professional, sectoral, and disciplinary lines. Engagement of the business sector, re-imagination of the roles of non-profit and quasi-public organizations, and rethinking of governmental strategies are likely to be integral to any systems development. Engagement with professions outside the social sciences, collaboration with new disciplines, involvement of people who have experiences with the challenge, and broad public engagement of a kind that may be largely unfamiliar to social work should all be invoked in the most compelling challenges.

Criterion 5: Solution to the challenge requires significant innovation. Seeking solutions that are transformative will require creative and significant innovation. Proposed transformative solutions should certainly address the plausible impact upon science, education, and practice in social work. Concept papers may address new areas or identify areas where the focus will be on initiating groundbreaking solutions to existing areas rather than scaling up more mature interventions.

Criterion 6: Impact on the Field Grand Challenges should lead to transformation of research, training, policy, and practice in social work, and in the field's relationship with other disciplines and sectors.