Bringing It All Together:
The Roles of Social Work Across the AUCD Network

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Abstract

Social Work contributes to the field of disability at the individual, organizational, and systems levels of practice. This exploratory study looks at 1) how Social Workers are practicing within the AUCD Network, and 2) how the discipline of Social Work contributes to the advancement of policy, advocacy, research and service for the field of disabilities.

Introduction

Social Workers have differing levels of education, licensure and experience. They work in micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. As social workers who participate in a variety of roles at the Oregon UCEDD/LEND, we were interested in learning about the various roles and engagement of Social Workers across the AUCD network.

Methods

Approach
We used Survey Monkey to develop "Social Work in the AUCD Network," a 10 question survey in English language.

Participant recruitment
The survey was disseminated via email to 150 individuals listed in the AUCD directory with social work in their title or credentials.
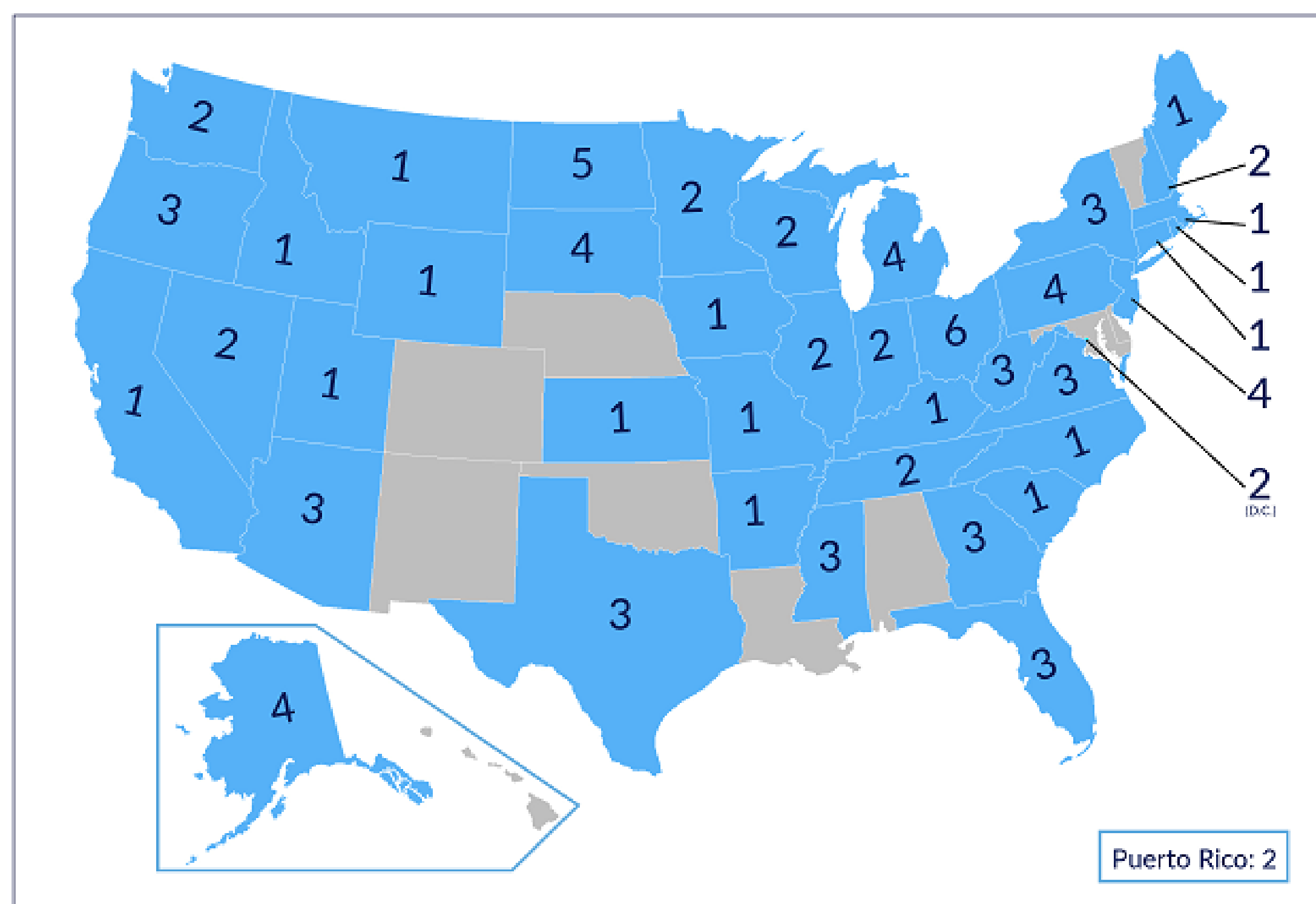

Figure 1. Indicates survey respondents across the network

Survey design
The survey was web-based, voluntary, and consisted of multiple choice and open ended questions displayed one at the time.
- Q 1-2 obtained info about degree and licensure
- Q 3-4 addressed program affiliation and role
- Q 5-6 addressed practice level and discipline embedding
- Q 8-9 identified number of other social work roles at centers
- Q 10 identifier for survey tracking

Data Analysis
We received a total of 92 responses. Data was exported into Excel to analyze trends according to each question.

Results

Education:
Bachelor of Social Work (BSW); Master of Social Work (MSW); Other
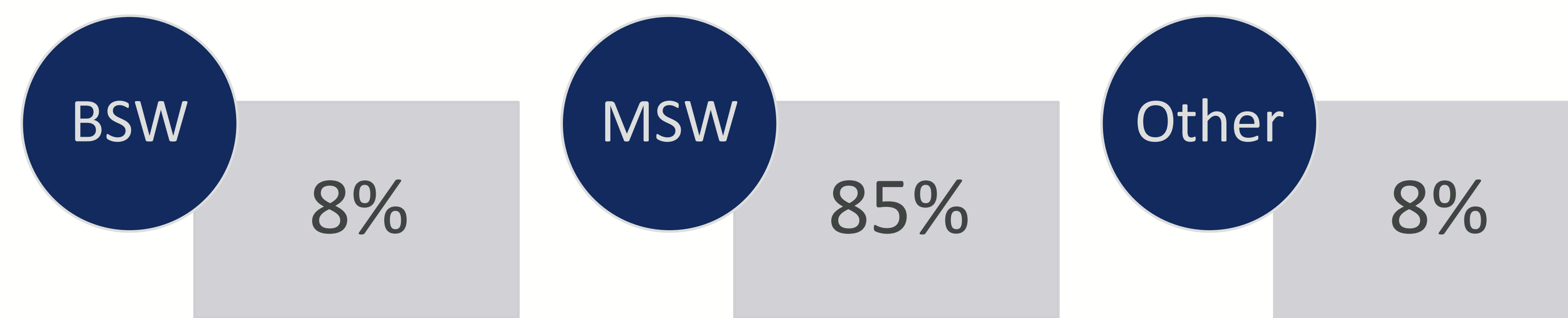
BSW 8%   MSW 85%   Other 8%

Figure 2. Indicates survey respondents level of social work education
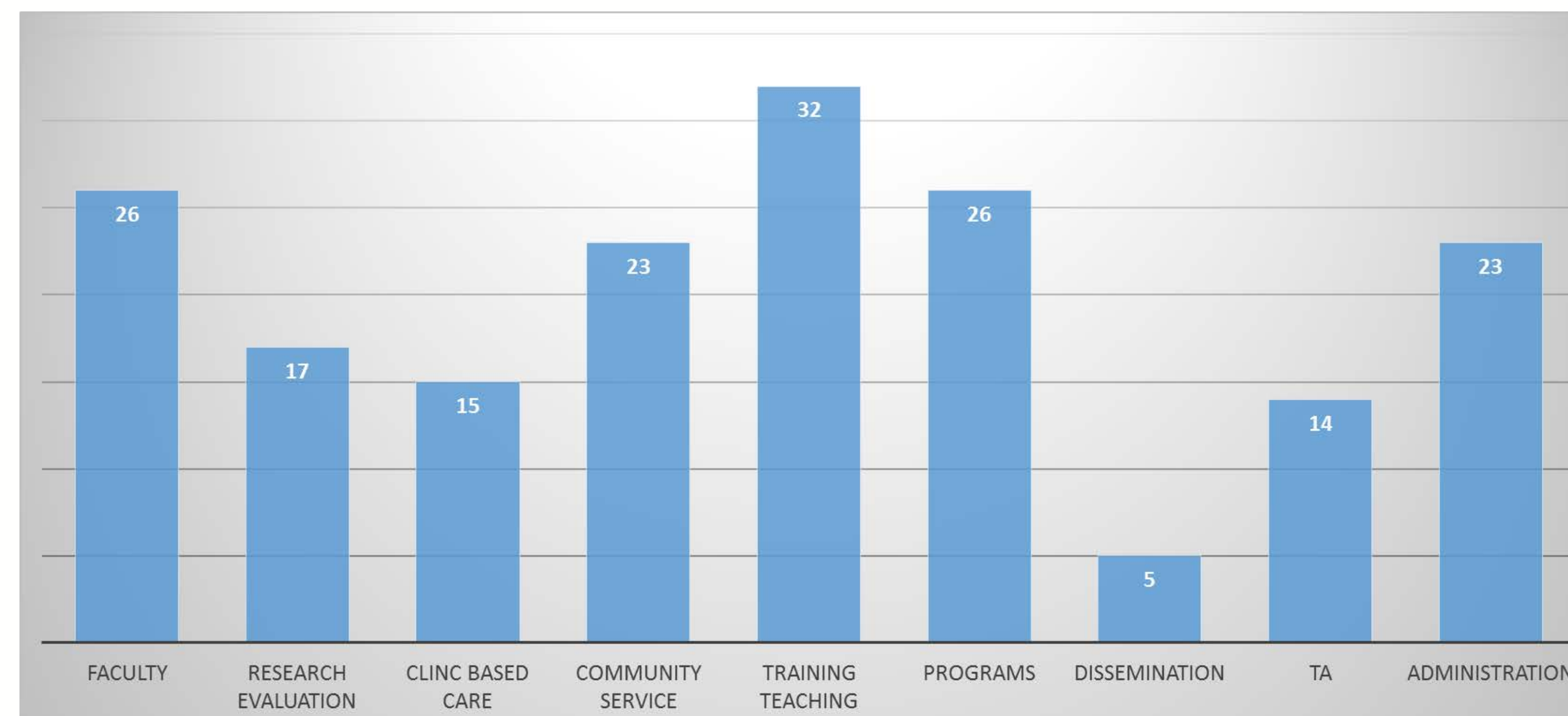
Roles of Social Workers in the AUCD network

Figure 3. Indicates survey respondents role(s) in practice

The role of Social Workers in AUCD represents a broad array of roles. Many respondents indicated they are working in multiple roles and across all core functions: pre-service education; community service (technical assistance and training); research and evaluation; and dissemination.
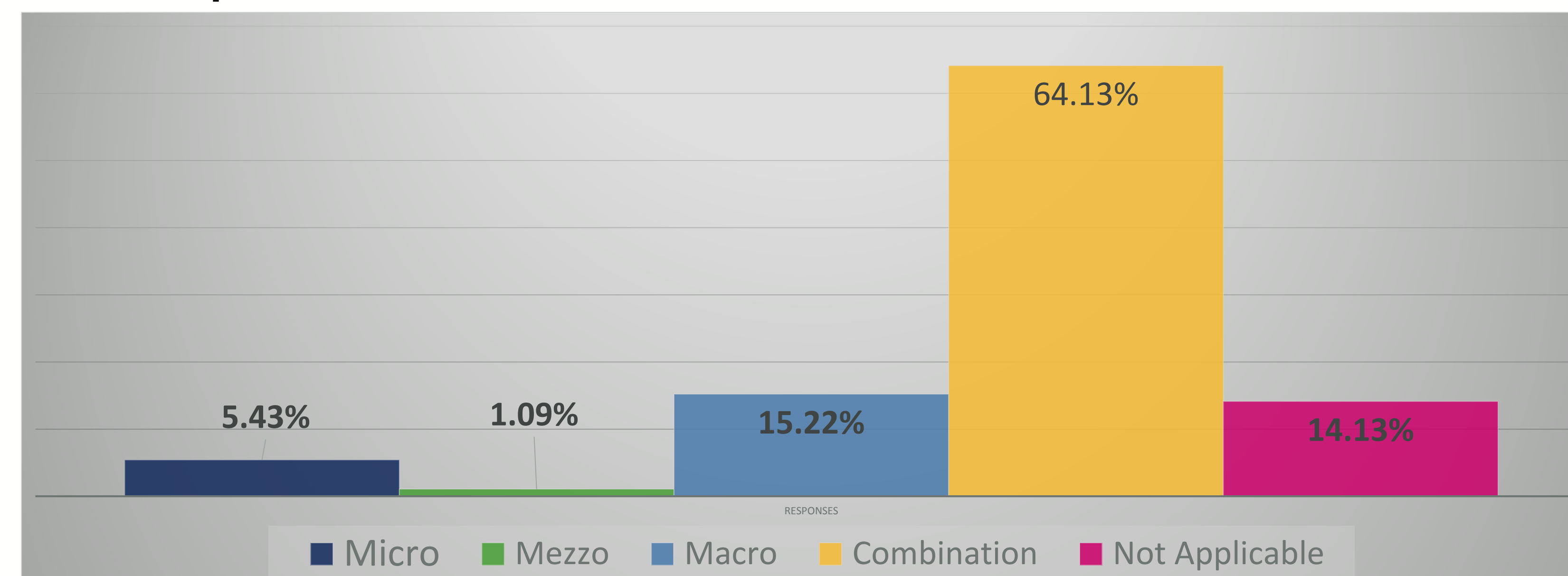
Level of practice in the AUCD network

Figure 4. Indicates survey respondents level of practice

Micro Level: individuals, problem solving, therapeutic care
Mezzo Level: groups, organizations, communities
Macro Level: state, regions, country, government, systems

Results continued

Social Work training informs work across the AUCD network

Figure 5: A word analysis of how respondents' social work training informs professional practice

Social work practice is informed by 6 core values: Service; Social Justice; Dignity and Worth of the Individual; Centrality of Relationships; Integrity; Competence. Social work as a profession emphasizes the well-being of both the individual in a social context and of society. Social work as a discipline focuses its attention on environmental forces that make, add to, and address problems.[1] This word analysis reflects the intersection of social work training and the contributions of social workers across the AUCD network.

Discussion and Next Steps

- Social work represents leadership within the AUCD network, yet we are not necessarily claiming that as a specific role.
- The social work discipline has a large representation across the AUCD network and is contributing in many roles, yet we don't seem to be very connected.
- Having a community can be a protective factor from burnout and/or compassion fatigue.
- There is a need to train the broader field of social work starting at the BSW level on disability, and share with them about the population, opportunities and resources within the AUCD.
- Identify ways to connect social workers in the field of disability and in our network.

Answer our follow up questions:
Non- Social Work Professionals: What role or contribution do you see of social workers in LEND, UCEDD, or IDDRC programs?

Social Workers: Would you participate in a social work network within AUCD? If so, what might that look like?

References: 1. National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, www.socialworkers.org