



Moving on Mobility: Collaboration and Trust



Mary Jo Monahan, MSW, LCSW
ASWB Chief Executive Officer

“Moving Forward: Social Work in the Age of Mobility,” the theme of the 2016 ASWB Education Conference in Jersey City, New Jersey, is a continuation of the mobility discussion that was started at the 2015 Education Conference. I am thrilled to share with you that a record 140 ASWB members and invited guests from U.S. and Canadian social work organizations as well as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will join us to contribute to the ongoing conversation on this important topic. We truly are “on our way” to finding a model that works for the social work profession in this lifetime.

In the year since the 2015 conference, ASWB leadership has been reaching out to social work

educators and practitioners to include them in a meaningful way in making Social Work Practice Mobility and License Portability a common goal for all. In addition, your ASWB Board, staff, and committee volunteers have been doing research, having discussions, and honing in on strategies to move the Mobility Plan forward. Leading these activities is ASWB’s Mobility Task Force, a group comprising not only ASWB members but members from other social work organizations in the U.S. and Canada. Those attending the conference will be hearing a progress report from the task force on Saturday, April 30.

This year we are ready to move beyond the exploration of mobility models in other professions to begin talking about what makes sense for social work. Last year, the watchword was “Trust” and we heard from other health care professions in both Canada and the U.S. how critical trusting the processes of other jurisdictions was to moving forward with mobility. This year the watchword is “Collaboration.”

Author Jon Mertz reminds us that “effective collaboration requires trust, and trust empowers effective collaboration.... Since trust is so crucial, there needs to be

a clear focus on how to protect it while letting it flourish fully.” Two presentations will highlight ASWB’s commitment to fostering both trust and collaboration among the organizations representing the three pillars of the social work profession—Education, Practice and Regulation. I am excited to give you a sneak peek at what you have to look forward to when you arrive in Jersey City.

A historic collaboration

For the first time, the leaders of the U.S. and Canadian social work organizations will gather together on stage to explore the interconnected responsibilities and strengths that each organization contributes to the profession. On Friday, Deana Morrow, a former regulator on the North Carolina social work board and a current member of ASWB’s Regulatory Education and Leadership (REAL) Committee, will moderate the panel in a session titled “Support for Mobility: Initiatives by Social Work Associations.” She will engage the panelists in a lively, thought-provoking discussion, clearly modeling how we will achieve mobility through collaboration, cooperation, and camaraderie.

Panel members representing education, practice, and regulation are:

- Council on Social Work Education - Darla Spence Coffey (VA)
- Canadian Association for Social Work Education/Association canadienne pour la formation en travail social - Dixon Sookraj (BC)
- National Association of Social Workers - Heidi McIntosh (DC)
- Canadian Association of Social Workers/Association canadienne des travailleurs sociaux - Fred Phelps (ON)
- Association of Social Work Boards - Mary Jo Monahan (VA)
- Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators/Le Conseil canadien des organismes de réglementation en travail social – John Mayr (BC)

This discussion will give attendees much to think about and help prepare the way for Saturday's interactive session, the World Marketplace.

The World Marketplace

Those who attended last year's conference will remember the World Café activity of answering Questions That Matter in a 'round robin' fashion. The Marketplace moves this activity forward by using focus groups to explore questions that will help us define a mobility model that fits our profession. The focus groups will bring ASWB members together with SAMHSA representatives, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) chapter executives, and social work educators for

engaging discussions. The intention is to build community, strengthen relationships, and engage everyone's unique contribution and voice—everyone talks! Time will also be spent digging deeper into defining the direction of Social Work Mobility.

The results of the focus group discussions will be shared with the Mobility Task Force, and focus group moderators will set an atmosphere that allows each participant to fully contribute. So come prepared to give honest, creative feedback and commit yourself to thoughtful, generative discussion during this interactive session. Your energy and insights will help the task force be responsive, innovative, and reasonable in creating a sustainable Mobility Plan.

Many ways to be engaged

In closing, I encourage you to visit the Education Conference website and bookmark the url <http://www.movingsocialwork2016.org> on whatever electronic device you plan to bring to the conference so that you have ready access to the agenda, session descriptions, and speaker bios. We are embracing technology and mobile communication platforms at the conference, so you have many ways to participate:

- in the Twitterverse, using #movingsocialwork2016
- via text messaging, using 540.360.1829
- by coming to the microphones

One of the core beliefs of the Mobility Task Force is that “people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to deal with current challenges. Exploring issues together encourages new

ways of thinking, and a shift in perspective creates new possibilities.” I look forward to being with you at the 2016 Education Conference as we engage in new and collaborative discussions and activities.