



Management, leadership, accountability

Administrators Workshop provides an opportunity to network and learn

The third ASWB Administrators Workshop was the largest yet! Held September 30 - October 2, 2016, in Washington, D.C., the specialized training for social work regulatory staff members included 12 attendees from multiple jurisdictions.

“We had a lot of returning jurisdictions,” says Jennifer Henkel, director of member services.

“States and provinces that had previously sent a staff member to one of the first two workshops encouraged other staff members to attend this year.” When multiple staff members from a single jurisdiction attend, Henkel explained, it demonstrates that the workshop is valuable to ASWB members.

The two-and-a-half-day workshop was led by two facilitators: Miriam Browne, registrar of the Manitoba College of Social Work, and Florence Huffman, administrator of the Kentucky Board of Social Work. Browne and Huffman made a great team, Henkel says, because they offered a wide range of experience. Browne’s years of experience in social work regulation were a huge asset, Henkel says, especially paired with Huffman’s breadth of knowledge of professional regulation drawn from careers in education and law.

Henkel was pleased with the size

of this year’s workshop and the enthusiasm of the participants. “They jumped right into it almost immediately,” she says. Despite different backgrounds and levels of experience, “They got to work very quickly and found ways to look for commonality” in their work. Attendees worked together to examine their own regulations, discuss common concerns, and collaborate throughout the interactive workshop.

The Administrators Workshop was developed to parallel New Board Member Training, which is one of ASWB’s most popular services to social work regulators. “We really see it as a companion” to New Board Member Training, Henkel says, “and we encourage administrators to attend both.” Like New Board Member Training, the Administrators Workshop is heavily interactive, with attendees breaking down into small groups to examine hypothetical cases—from unflattering news articles to a complaint against a sitting board member. Along the way, Browne and Huffman drew on existing case law, best practices, and true stories from the front lines of regulation. “They did a lot of hard work,” Henkel says.

The pool of attendees for the Administrators Workshop, however, is considerably smaller

than the pool for New Board Member Training, Henkel says. After three consecutive years of Administrators Workshops, the program will move to alternating years. With 12 participants, 2016 represented a marked increase over the previous two years. “We want to make sure we’re offering the Administrators Workshop often enough,” Henkel says, “without diluting the pool of attendees. We hope that by having this workshop in alternating years, we can have great attendance every time we offer it.”

Workshop attendees brought a broad range of experience to the training—from a brand-new registrar to very experienced administrators, licensing managers, and attorneys who work with social work boards. For many attendees, this was their first interaction with ASWB, much as New Board Member Training is often the first contact between regulatory volunteers and the association. This workshop “enhances member regulatory effectiveness,” Henkel says. “It also builds relationships across jurisdictions, which can help make social work practice mobility work in the long term.”