



Collaboration, feedback, listening, revision lead to positive outcome

“I believe that when it is time to vote on a plan, this delegate assembly will speak with one voice, and all the commonalities that we share will be the basis for moving forward.”

– Florence Huffman,
Executive Director,
Kentucky Board of Social Work,
ASWB Director at Large,
and ASWB Mobility
Task Force member

What took more than two years to craft took less than a minute to pass: ASWB membership voted resoundingly to adopt Resolution 2017-1, [Member Boards’ Contributions to Mobility Strategy and the Mobility Strategy](#) itself. Forty-seven of 51 jurisdictions present at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly voted Yes. Only 26 affirmative votes were required to pass the resolution.

Delegates voiced strong support for the resolution and the Mobility Strategy before the vote. Robert Payne, ASWB Board member and chair of the Idaho board, said:

All regulatory boards in Idaho are under an executive order to look at our rules and regs. ...Some of the language in the resolution is the exact language that we are being asked to provide to the government. When we met with a group of legislators, the first question was: “What are you doing about mobility?” The second point made was that all of this is a workforce issue. There are two well-funded organizations that I know of that are pushing the anti-regulatory movement in the United States. It is well-funded. If it hasn’t come to your state, it will be coming.

Kate Zacher-Pate, executive director of the Minnesota board, offered the following support:

In my mind, this particular resolution demonstrates an incremental getting ready to really shape the plan so it will work for individual jurisdictions. This is an opportunity to foster even more collaboration within jurisdictions and between jurisdictions and the association. I appreciate that we are not jumping to a preconceived solution and that everyone is going to take the time to make an assessment of what is needed.

Many members of the Mobility Task Force shared their perspectives, which had been guided by their participation on the task force but influenced significantly by their experience serving on their jurisdictional boards. “I really can’t imagine a better time to think about looking at our laws within our state to improve portability,” said Kim Madsen, executive director of the California board. “Mobility is here. ...It wasn’t that hard to



Florence Huffman (KY) speaks in support of Resolution 2017-1 as Carmen Collado (NY) waits for her turn at the microphone.

look at our laws and find places to make improvements.”

Iowa board member Mark Hillenbrand concurred. “In Iowa, 33 percent of the workforce requires a license, which makes us the most regulated state in the U.S. Over the past year or so, the environment has been such that professions are being questioned. ... I look forward to continuing to communicate with our legislators about the importance of regulation. ... I also look forward to noting that social work as a profession actively engages in addressing emerging challenges, and workforce mobility is one of those challenges. Telehealth and the reality that we can practice without a physical presence is not only emerging but happening now.”

Florence Huffman, executive director of the Kentucky board, ASWB Board member, and Mobility Task Force member, spoke in favor of resolution and the strategy, noting: “This strategy asks

for each jurisdiction to review and consider their regulations, policies, statutes. We honor one another when we embrace that every jurisdiction has done a considerate vetting of the professionals that they license in their jurisdiction and there is nothing diminished by us proceeding forward with the strategy.”

When ASWB President M. Jenise Comer announced the resolution had passed, the room erupted with shouts and applause. The path had been paved for starting

the next phase of the strategy: Implementation.

Next steps

In the coming months, ASWB staff will reach out to individual jurisdictions to help each U.S. member board complete the four steps of the resolution:

- Review applicable statutes, rules/regulation, and policies related to accepting the Standards outlined in the attached Mobility Strategy
- Review applicable statutes, rules/regulation, and policies related to accepting the primary source data verified by ASWB staff and maintained in the secure centralized databank
- Identify any barriers or restrictions in the jurisdiction’s statutes, rules/regulation, and policies related to accepting and participating in the ASWB Mobility Strategy

- Identify the benefits to accepting and participating in the ASWB Mobility strategy

To assist with these steps, staff has already prepared and provided to each delegate a Mobility book titled *ASWB Member Readiness for Mobility*. In addition to the text of the resolution and the Mobility strategy, the book includes, among other sections:

- comparisons of licensure provisions across jurisdictions
- regulatory provisions by jurisdiction that facilitate mobility
- lists of license titles and which licensure category “bucket” the titles fall into based on the Model Social Work Practice Act (model law)
- licensing requirements compared to the Standards outlined in the Mobility strategy
- In short, the Mobility book does much of the “heavy lifting” that member boards have agreed to undertake by adopting the resolution. The book, however, is only a starting point.

“The research that is in the Mobility book should be used as a starting point for discussion. It has been compiled and summarized by ASWB staff, and therefore it is open to each board’s individual interpretation,” said Director of Member Services Jennifer Henkel. “Members still need to review their statutes, rules, regs, and policies. We need you to show us where your jurisdiction is different if you are claiming that your standards do not fit the standards and essential criteria of the Mobility strategy. Provide ASWB staff the facts and references in your regulation.

“Staff are ready to help with this process so that by the time we get to the Education Conference on Developing Tools for Social Work Mobility in May, members will be ready to collaborate on finding the commonalities and overcoming barriers to implementation of the Mobility strategy.”

Two copies of the Mobility book are being sent to each jurisdiction with their dues statements.

Pictures worth more than a thousand words

Key to reaching adoption of the Mobility Strategy was the work of the Mobility Task Force. Since 2015, this group of 12 individuals representing regulators, practitioners, and educators from 11 jurisdictions has worked together tirelessly to brainstorm, propose, seek feedback, revise, and finally present ASWB’s Mobility strategy.

Who knew that the foundation of the task force’s deliberations harkened back to the 18th century and the U.S. Bill of Rights? Anyone who has listened to ASWB legal counsel Dale Atkinson would know that professional regulation is a states’ rights issue protected by the Constitution. But in case you didn’t have this knowledge, ASWB’s Mobility Task Force report presented at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly explains all in a six-minute [video](#).

The story begins at Culpeper’s Burgandine House, one of the town’s oldest properties that dates to 1749. The house is curated by Susan Williams and other volunteers. Williams also leads a group of reenactors called Out of Time Teachers whose presence during the video added authenticity and ambience.

Mobility Task Force member Fran Franklin traveled to Culpeper from Delaware to narrate the regulatory journey across three centuries. In addition to Franklin, task force member Harold Dean of Arkansas provided a remote cameo performance, and ASWB President and Mobility Task Force Co-chair M. Jenise Comer lent her distinctive voice to the project.

All ASWB departments were involved in the process. “If some departments weren’t represented on camera, they were working behind the scenes,” said Bobbie Hartman, marketing and publications manager in the Communications and Marketing department. Hartman wrote the script and directed the video. “Office Operations and Volunteer Engagement and Outreach staff made sure the rooms were available when we needed them and that food was provided for the video crew, staff, and volunteers.

“It was great to work with staff in a different way,” said Hartman. “It was a lot of fun to see people step up and show talents we otherwise might not have seen.”