



## Endorsement language is key

*Out of 52 U.S. jurisdictions, 48 (92%) have a provision that could be used to make practice mobility a reality*

ASWB started focusing on practice mobility in 2013, when the Board of Directors identified it as a strategic objective in the 2014–2018 strategic plan. Their decision to elevate this previously thought “unattainable” objective to the strategic plan demonstrated that ASWB was willing to put energy and financial support behind it so that practice mobility would become a reality “in this lifetime.”

Fast forward to 2018 and the current attention on occupational licensing as a barrier to practice. Because of the work of the Mobility Task Force and all ASWB members, a Mobility strategy is in place and jurisdictions are working on implementation plans. In addition, the 2018 Regulation and Standards Committee is proposing amendments to the Model Social Work Practice Act that could make endorsement language a turnkey solution.

Getting to a point where a solution for practice mobility might be as easy as using language already in 92 percent of U.S. member jurisdictions’ statutes came during the meeting of the 2018 Regulation and Standards Committee in July. It did not come easily, reported Director of Member Services Jennifer Henkel, who staffs the committee, but “the more we talked about changing the language from

‘license transfer’ to ‘licensure by endorsement,’ the fewer objections committee members had.”

The change to the Model Social Work Practice Act proposed by RAS replaces Section 308. Qualifications for License Transfer with a new section titled Qualifications for Licensure by Endorsement. The nine application requirements listed for license transfer are reduced to two for licensure by endorsement: submitting the application with payment of all fees and presenting proof of an active license in good standing.

Discussion was particularly interesting, Henkel said, because two of the committee members this year are member board staff members—Mavis Azariah-Armattoe of the District of Columbia and Jaime Hoyle of Virginia. Both jurisdictions offer licensure by endorsement. Of the proposed changes, Hoyle said: “I think, most importantly, referring to licensure by endorsement rather than license transfer more accurately reflects the language and the processes currently utilized by jurisdictions.

“License transfer seems more friendly to Mobility because it implies that if an applicant has a license in one jurisdiction, then all the applicant has to do is move that license to another jurisdiction.

Endorsement language, however, makes the jurisdictions more active participants, as they have to actively endorse the license from another state if it meets the necessary requirements. Still, it is my opinion that endorsement language is just as friendly to Mobility because jurisdictions are relaxing their endorsement requirements and moving more toward trusting the licensure process of the other jurisdictions, while clearly maintaining the ability to make their own licensure decisions.”

The proposed language will be presented for a vote by delegates at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly in San Antonio, Texas.

### Turnkey solution

Endorsement, reciprocity, and licensure by credential language in statutes has the potential to streamline the licensure process for licensed applicants seeking additional equivalent licensure in other jurisdictions because the issuing jurisdiction provides verification, or “endorsement,” of the requesting applicant’s license status. California, Indiana, and the District of Columbia are among those jurisdictions offering an expedited process for currently licensed applicants.

As Kim Madsen, executive officer of the California Board of Behavioral Sciences, said in her presentation at the 2018 ASWB Education Conference, “Developing Tools for Social Work Mobility”: “Trust is something I can’t emphasize enough. We need to be comfortable that the [licensing] jurisdiction has done its due diligence to vet the applicant.”

## New language proposed for Model Social Work Practice Act

Section 308. Qualifications for Licensure by Endorsement.

(a) To obtain a license by endorsement at the equivalent designation and subject to Article IV of this Act, an applicant currently licensed as a social worker in another jurisdiction must provide evidence satisfactory to the Board, subject to Article III, Section 311, that the applicant:

(1) Has submitted a written application and paid the fee as specified by the Board; and

(2) Has presented to the Board proof of an active social work license in good standing.

Madsen explained the new legislation that California has introduced to streamline the process for out-of-state licensed applicants seeking additional licensure. When adopted, the law will allow licensed applicants who have held an equivalent license in good standing for two years and who graduated from an accredited program with a master’s or doctoral degree to receive a clinical license in California after submitting fingerprints and passing the jurisprudence exam. The state also requires licensees to complete 12 to 15 hours of coursework in California law, ethics, and cultures as well as a one-time, six-hour course in mental health recovery-oriented care.

Indiana offers licensed applicants exemption from taking the national licensure exam when the following criteria are met: the applicant has held an equivalent license in good standing for three of the last five years, has passed the appropriate licensure exam in another jurisdiction, and passes a jurisprudence exam in Indiana. The endorsement

provision exempts the applicant only from the licensing exam, according to Indiana code. Licensure, certification, or registration in another state does not guarantee licensure in Indiana.

The District of Columbia offers licensed applicants licensure by endorsement if the applicant has a current license in good standing verified by the jurisdiction and has a passing score on the appropriate national licensing exam. Applicants provide proof of identity and pay required fees.

### Not just a U.S. issue

Making social work practice mobility a reality “in this lifetime” has been identified primarily as a U.S. issue because Canada’s Agreement on Internal Trade (now the Canadian Free Trade Agreement [CFTA]) established labour mobility for all provinces in 1995.

Despite CFTA, however, labour mobility in Canada has yet to be a reality interjurisdictionally. Some reasons include provincial exceptions based on legitimate objectives that occur when requirements differ

significantly among provinces. Legitimate objectives are granted for protection of public security and safety reasons. Additionally, mobility between the U.S. and Canada for both registered (Canada) and licensed (U.S.) social workers remains challenging.

### **Finding common ground**

The idea of building a Mobility solution in the U.S. based on a licensure by endorsement model is in alignment with CFTA. Expediting the licensure process in U.S. jurisdictions for licensed social workers in good standing is finding common ground with CFTA when granting additional licenses is accomplished without requiring licensees to undergo significant additional training, work experience, examination, or assessment except to fulfill U.S. jurisdiction-specific requirements

## **New on MovingSocialWork.org**

A [new map](#) identifying “Mobility friendly zones” was unveiled on MovingSocialWork.org at the 2018 Education Conference. The three jurisdictions discussed here are among those shown on the map as making excellent progress toward achieving social work practice mobility. Members are encouraged to email [Jennifer Henkel](#) about progress made toward adopting endorsement language or other activity on their Mobility implementation plans so that their jurisdictions can be updated on the map.