

2025 Regulatory Research Committee report to the Delegate Assembly



Charge to committee

The Regulatory Research Committee reports to the Board of Directors. The committee shall be composed of individuals representing a diverse range of regulatory and academic perspectives. As necessary and appropriate, the committee will work in collaboration with other ASWB committees and task forces to complete its charges. The committee's work will be guided by the ASWB strategic plan whenever applicable.

Ongoing charges

1. Conducting an annual assessment of the regulatory research needs of ASWB membership, to include prioritizing the types of research needed and making the list available to interested researchers.
2. Reviewing published research about occupational licensing, with particular focus on the social work profession, and making relevant research and/or a synopsis of the research available to ASWB members.

2025 charges

1. Continuing to monitor current research projects, including publication status. Recommending strategies for distribution of findings to members and the larger social work community.
2. Finalizing the RFP and matrix to be used in the next funding cycle.
3. Recommending dates for the next funding cycle to the Board of Directors.

Recommendations/actions

1. The Regulatory Research Committee discussed and prioritized topics for future research in response to needs identified by regulators. The selected topics are:
 - Supervision, which may include:
 - The relationship between accessibility, quality, and cost of supervision and social workers' competence
 - Independent and supervised practice
 - Professional boundary management
 - Preparedness to practice

Committee members

Chairperson

Amy Ashton-Williams, Oregon

Angela Dickson, Oklahoma

Adrienne Ekas, Maryland
Board liaison

Veronica Knowles, Mississippi

Kathy Outland, Oregon

LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro,
Illinois

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- Technology, which may include:
 - Ways to support practice
 - Regulations needed to ensure ethical, competent, and safe service delivery
 - Potential areas of focus include AI, documentation, teletherapy, in-person engagement, social media, interventions, consent, system management, and confidentiality, as well as the impact of technology on clients, ethical decision-making, and the benefits and limitations of emerging tools.

2. The committee developed a proposed budget and timeline for the 2026 RFP cycle.

3. Members reviewed updates on ASWB research initiatives and research projects selected by the 2023 Regulatory Research Committee.

COMMITTEE-SELECTED RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATES

Western Kentucky University

Erin Warfel, DSW, MSS, MLSP, LCSW, Whitney Harper, Ph.D., MSW, April Murphy, Ph.D., CSW
Identifying Opportunities to Enhance Equitable Paths to Social Work Licensure: The study aims to address three research questions.

The research team presented a poster presentation at the BPD conference in March 2025 and at NASW conference in June 2025; presentation was entitled “Examining Disparity in Licensure Pass Rates”. A proposal was accepted for a poster presentation at the CSWE Annual Conference in October 2025. The poster is related to the theme of “It’s Time to Act: Championing Disability Justice and Disability Joy in Social Work”- findings related to participant comments on exam accommodations and misconceptions will be highlighted by sharing what ASWB offers related to “non-standard testing arrangements”. The research team is appreciative of the time ASWB took to meet and provide clarification and answer questions. A final report/manuscript(s) has been drafted and sent to ASWB. The research team received comments and feedback for edits to be made prior to submission for final publication. An additional qualitative manuscript has been drafted and is being edited for publication submission.

Rutgers University School of Social Work

Joy J. Kim, Ph.D., MSW; Michael M. Joo, Ph.D., MSW

The Effects of Social Work Regulatory Rules on Public Safety and Social Workers’ Earnings: The project will look at the effects of social work regulatory rules on (1) indicators of public safety and (2) social workers’ earnings.

Five projects on clinical supervision are underway.

The researchers’ current focus is on analyzing the supervision rules data with license exam data and the National Practitioner Data Bank. They are currently collecting data from regulatory boards on practices around supervision.

Brigham Young University

Cole Hooley, Ph.D, LCSW, Katherine Marcal, Ph.D, MSW, Gabby Cunningham, Ph.D., MBA

Understanding the Impact Licensing Policies have on Scaling-up the Social Work Workforce and

Mitigating Harm: The project addresses two main questions: (1) What are the long-term impacts of licensure changes on the size of the social work workforce? (2) What potential impact will these policies have on mitigating public harm?

The researchers have obtained institutional review board approval, received ethical violation data from the state, defined causal variables, and built and calibrated their simulation model. They presented their research at the ASWB Education Meeting in May 2025. Tasks in process include developing a presentation for the state, developing a policy brief, and drafting an academic article.

Future discussion topics and/or suggestions for 2026 charge

- Continue to monitor current research projects, including publication status. Recommend strategies for distribution of findings to members and the larger social work community.
- Issue RFP, review proposals, and select award recipients.