

2026 Regulatory Research Committee report to the Delegate Assembly

Committee Charge

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

- 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.
- 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.

2026 charges

- Posting an RFP
- Reviewing and selecting proposals
- Sending award letters

Recommendations/actions

- The Regulatory Research Committee posted a request for proposals and received 24 proposals on the topics of supervision and technology.
- The committee reviewed, discussed, and selected four projects, approving a total of \$391,354 in funding.
- Researchers were notified of the outcome of their proposals.

COMMITTEE-SELECTED RESEARCH PROJECTS

State Regulation of Clinical Supervision and LCSWs' Density and Earnings: Zip Code Level Analyses

Researcher: Joy Kim, Ph.D., MSW, of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

Amount: \$81,589

Behavioral health workforce shortages and access to mental health services, particularly in rural and underserved communities, have become a national concern. Occupational regulation has emerged as a critical contributor to the problem. Because supervised clinical practice is a vital mechanism through which clinical social workers gain competence and prepare for independent licensure, state regulation of clinical supervision for Licensed Clinical Social Workers is mandated. The rigor of these state regulations varies, but it remains unknown how this variation affects LCSW density, geographic distribution, salaries, and overall earnings.

Amidst the growing debate over whether occupational regulation restricts the growth of the behavioral health workforce, this study aims to examine

Committee members

Chair

Amy Ashton-Williams (OR)

Angela Dickson (OK)

Samuel Mammen (AB)

Juliette Millin (VI)

LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro (IL)

Board liaison

Stephan Viehweg

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Lavina Harless, LCSW

Jennifer Henkel, LCSW, CAE

Linda Hogan

how the rigor of state clinical supervision regulation influences the geographic density of LCSWs and LCSW salaries and earnings across ZIP code areas in the United States. These findings will provide the first national empirical evidence on the link between clinical supervision regulation and the density and compensation of clinical social workers. Ultimately, the study will produce evidence to inform policy decisions by licensing boards, legislators, educators, and workforce advocates seeking to balance workforce equity with public access to behavioral health services.

Maintaining Public and Professional Protection in the Age of AI: A National Assessment of AI Adoption and Oversight in Social Work Practice

Researchers: Elizabeth Matthews & Lauri Goldkind, Fordham University

Amount: \$80,059

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into professional practice, social work regulators, employers, and educators face urgent questions regarding safe, ethical, and accountable use of these technologies. The study will provide the first national assessment of AI adoption and oversight among licensed social work practitioners, generating evidence to inform professional standards, workforce development, organizational oversight, and regulatory decision-making.

Modifiable Predictors of Social Work Licensure Preparedness and Examination Outcomes: A Mixed-Methods Regulatory Research Study

Researcher: April Viverette, University of North Alabama

Amount: \$90,000

While substantial attention has been devoted to examination outcomes and disparities, comparatively little research has identified the modifiable factors that contribute to candidates' preparedness for licensure and examination success. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study identifies actionable, modifiable factors — supervision quality, perceived organizational support, and financial well-being — associated with self-reported preparedness for licensure and self-reported examination outcomes among social workers and licensure candidates. Findings will generate evidence-informed recommendations that strengthen supervision practices, reinforce licensure-preparation supports, and inform regulatory decision-making while maintaining the public protection mission of professional licensure.

Going beyond hours: Assessing the quality of social work supervision

Researchers: Mimi Choy-Brown, Ph.D., University of Minnesota & Karen Sewell, Ph.D., Carleton University

Amount: \$139,706

The study advances the development of competent and ethical social workers by rigorously generating and piloting a social work supervision quality assessment tool that is evidence- and practitioner-informed, valid, and pragmatic for widescale use.

Social work regulatory communities charged with assuring public safety make critical decisions about social work supervision that are highly significant for the social work workforce and the public. Currently, these decisions are made with the best available information, which currently does not include indicators of relationships between current supervision conditions and regulatory outcomes. This project will build on existing guidelines and empirical and practice-based knowledge to generate a social work supervision and regulatory outcomes framework (aim 1), develop an assessment tool of the regulatory outcomes of quality social work supervision through aim 1 findings integration and prioritization (aim 2), and conduct a pilot test of the feasibility, appropriateness, and psychometric characteristics of the assessment tool (aim 3). The project will produce a strengthened foundation to further uncover regulatory outcomes of social work supervision and inform the judicious use of limited resources to promote competent and ethical social work practice for the public good.