



CELEBRATING 15 YEARS ♦ 1993-2008

IASWR Listserv Reader Survey

IASWR conducted a survey of IASWR Listserv readership that ran from February 5, 2008 to March 18, 2008. In that time, 377 of the 2,772 (13.6%) Listserv subscribers who received the original Reader Survey announcement responded. A tally of responses, analysis of responses and an overview of the written responses can be seen below. Overall, the findings of the survey were very positive and informative. Most respondents reported finding the *Listserv* "Useful" to "Very Useful" (94.96%). Also, most respondents said they did not have any technical difficulties receiving the *Listserv* (77.98%). Finally, most respondents said they share the *Listserv* announcements with others (67.64%) and report using it in their teaching (41.64%). While only 10% reported receiving grant funding as a result of the *Listserv Announcements*, more than 25% reported that they had presentations or publications accepted, and 38% attended conferences from information on the *Listserv*. The written comments about these items were very positive and they were ranked among the three highest most helpful and interesting elements of the *Listserv*.

Reader Characteristics

The majority of survey respondents (55.44%) have been receiving the *Listserv Announcements* for over 2 years. This demonstrates that readers find this resource useful enough to continue subscribing. Also, given the fact that these readers have responded to the survey, they must also be fairly active in their readership and not simply individuals who receive the listserv and immediately erase it.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents identified themselves as social work faculty (356 total), though it must be noted that they could respond to teaching at various program levels (teaching at the MSW and PhD level would register 2 counts) so the total number may be slightly skewed. Students and agency staff made up the two second largest groups of readers with 103 students and 131 agency staff, again with the same caveat that they could respondent multiple times so numbers reported may be larger than the actual total. Social work field instructors are amongst the *Listserv* readers, but make up the smallest group with 74 identifying themselves in these positions.

All respondents (377) answered the question about whether they were actively doing social work research and 82.49% answered yes - they were actively involved in research.

Finally, when asked what other listservs they were subscribed to 148 persons responded. The most commonly referenced listservs included: BPD (22), NASW (20), CSWE (19), Child Welfare Information Gateway/Children's Bureau (17), Child Maltreatment (9), and Chapin Hall (9).

How long have you been receiving the IASWR Listserv Announcements?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
0-4 months	23	6.10%	
5 months – 1 year	39	10.34%	
1-2 years	97	25.73%	

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more than 2 years	209	55.44%					
(Did not answer)	9	2.39%					
Total Responses	377		20%	40%	60%	80%	100%

I am a social work faculty at the following program level(s):

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
BSW	82	21.75%	
MSW	158	41.91%	
PhD	116	30.77%	
NA	113	29.97%	
(Did not answer)	28	7.43%	
Total Responses	497		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Multiple answers per participant possible. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

I am a social work field instructor in the following program level (s):

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
BSW	17	4.51%	
MSW	49	13.00%	
PhD	8	2.12%	
NA	210	55.70%	
(Did not answer)	112	29.71%	
Total Responses	396		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Multiple answers per participant possible. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

I am a social work student in the following program level:






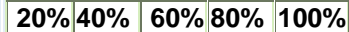
Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
BSW	1	0.27%	
MSW	8	2.12%	
PhD	94	24.93%	
NA	168	44.56%	
(Did not answer)	106	28.12%	
Total Responses	377		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Multiple answers per participant possible. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

I am an agency based social work professional in the following position(s):




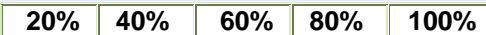
Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
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Direct Practice	41	10.88%	
Administrator	35	9.28%	
Researcher	55	14.59%	
NA	174	46.15%	
(Did not answer)	100	26.53%	
Total Responses	405		

Multiple answers per participant possible. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.





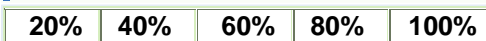
Are you currently actively involved in social work research?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	311	82.49%	
No	63	16.71%	
(Did not answer)	3	0.80%	
Total Responses	377		




Dissemination of Listserv

Most *Listserv* readers receive the email directly. Only 5.04% reported having it forwarded to them. However, 67.64% of respondents said they forwarded the emails, with the majority saying that they share it with more than 5 people. Therefore, the distribution list of 2,820 may not be an accurate count of how many are actually reading the announcements – if one were to use this report as a representative sample then it could be estimated that almost 5,500 people are reading the *Listserv* (67.64% of 2,820 is 1,907 – if 26% of those persons send it to 5 people that's an additional 2,500 readers).

How do you receive the IASWR Listserv Announcements ?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Subscribe Directly	356	94.43%	
It is forwarded from a subscriber	19	5.04%	
Portions are excerpted and forwarded to me by another member of our staff	0	0%	
(Did not answer)	2	0.53%	
Total Responses	377		





Do you subscribe to receive the IASWR Listserv Announcements at more than one e-mail address?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	14	3.71%	
No	363	96.29%	
(Did not answer)	0	0%	




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Total Responses	377		20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
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If yes, how many?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
1	1	0.27%	
2	12	3.18%	
3 to more than 5	0	0%	
(Did not answer)	364	96.55%	
Total Responses	377		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Do you share the IASWR Listserv Announcements with others?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	255	67.64%	
No	119	31.56%	
(Did not answer)	3	0.80%	
Total Responses	377		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

If yes, how many?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
1	41	10.88%	
2	56	14.85%	
3	38	10.08%	
4	15	3.98%	
5	6	1.59%	
more than 5	98	25.99%	
(Did not answer)	123	32.63%	
Total Responses	377		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

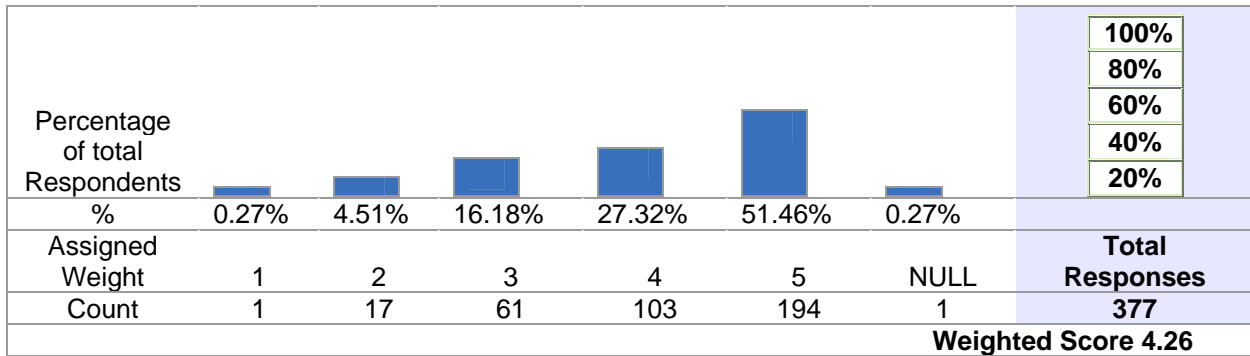
Perceived Usability

Most readers find this service to be useful – 51.46% report it being very useful with an overall weighted score of 4.26 (3 being useful and 5 being very useful).

The Funding Announcements were both of the most interest and the most helpful feature of the *Listserv*. The Calls were reported as the second feature of interest and third feature that was most helpful. The Conferences were the third feature of interest and second feature found most helpful. Nominations and News were found to be of least interest and the least helpful features.

How useful is this service to you?						
Responses	1 – Not Useful at all	2	3 – Useful	4	5 – Very Useful	(Did not answer)

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What features most INTEREST you? Please rank order with 1 being the most interesting and 8 being of least interest.

Responses	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8	Weighted Rank (Score)
Funding Announcements	176	53	44	24	15	24	11	18	1 (2335)
Calls	90	82	32	27	15	24	42	42	2 (1879)
Conferences	30	85	75	36	48	41	26	21	3 (1853)
Research Findings	36	45	55	46	50	51	34	41	4 (1625)
Online Resources	20	28	43	66	59	61	49	30	5 (1491)
Publications	5	39	43	54	60	58	70	29	6 (1424)
News and Notices	6	15	40	62	87	58	48	37	7 (1358)
Nominations/Applications	4	17	29	44	20	35	72	130	8 (1004)
(Did not answer)									8
Total Responses									377

What features are most HELPFUL to you? Please rank order with 1 being the most helpful, and 8 being the least helpful.

Responses	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8	Weighted Rank (Score)
Funding Announcements	141	54	39	18	20	21	13	19	1 (2018)
Conferences	28	70	57	37	47	38	21	17	2 (1602)
Calls	80	56	28	23	18	29	39	44	3 (1596)
Research Findings	33	46	50	45	34	37	26	40	4 (1450)
Online Resources	34	31	37	49	59	45	29	25	5 (1410)
Publications	11	36	49	41	47	58	53	13	6 (1320)
News and Notices	4	22	33	57	68	47	46	28	7 (1202)
Nominations/Applications	1	11	22	40	13	27	75	114	8 (814)
(Did not answer)									43
Total Responses									377

How Listserv Has Been Used

In terms of practical applicability, the *Listserv* appears to be used most often in teaching, with 41.64% of respondents saying they use items from the *Listserv* in their teaching. 36.87% of

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respondents also reported attending conferences as a result of information received in the *Listserv*.




One point of follow-up would be to learn what elements of the *Listserv* were used in teaching.

Of the 38 people who reported obtaining funding as a result of information received on the *Listserv* it seems that the majority pertained to dissertation awards, fellowships and funding to attend trainings (no specific source noted).




Almost 100 people reported having papers accepted due to information obtained on the *Listserv*. Most reported being accepted to present at conferences. The most common conferences noted were SSWR (22), CSWE (13), and GSA (3).

The response as to what conferences were attended as a result of the information provided by the *Listserv* was slightly more varied. About 6 respondents reported attending the IASWR summer research workshops and pre-conference sessions as a result of the information they learned on the *Listserv*. As with responses above, the vast majority reported attendance at SSWR (35) and others reported attendance at APHSA and NIH sponsored events.




Have you obtained funding (grant, fellowship, or other support) as a result of information you received here?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	38	10.08%	
No	338	89.66%	
(Did not answer)	1	0.27%	
Total Responses	377		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%




Have you had papers accepted for either a presentation or publication through information you received here?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	96	25.46%	
No	274	72.68%	
(Did not answer)	7	1.86%	
Total Responses	377		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Have you attended any conference(s) as a result of information received here?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	139	36.87%	
No	228	60.48%	
(Did not answer)	10	2.65%	
Total Responses	377		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Do you use items from the IASWR Listserv Announcements in your teaching?

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	157	41.64%	
No	110	29.18%	
N/A	105	27.85%	






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(Did not answer)	5	1.33%					
Total Responses	377		20%	40%	60%	80%	100%

Interest in Specialized Listserv Announcements

A question was included on the survey to see if there was interest in changing the format of the *Listserv* to offer multiple emails that would cover specialized topics. Overall respondents answered that they prefer to receive the current format (60.21%). This was even reiterated in many of the comments made at the end of the survey that echo liking the current format.

Because of an increasing amount of information available, IASWR has considered offering multiple, specialized Listserv Announcements in focused areas such as either by category, e.g. conferences, funding, calls; or interest area, e.g. aging, children and families, behavioral health. Check all that apply.

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
Prefer receiving the current mix in each issue	227	60.21%	
Would subscribe to specialized Listserv Announcements	162	42.97%	
Would be interested in specialization by category	127	33.69%	
Would be interested in specialization by interest area	164	43.50%	
(Did not answer)	2	0.53%	
Total Responses	682		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Multiple answers per participant possible. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

Suggested Improvements

Finally, readers were asked about some potential areas for improvements. When asked about technical difficulties 77.98% said they have not had any technical difficulties. Of those who did have difficulties most had problems with the email ending up in their spam folders (11.67%). Of those who reported other issues the most common was that the subject line read "Spam" and those with Mac computers seemed to have difficulties.






Of the 48 people who provided feedback about potential format changes, only 15 reported actual recommendations. Most said NA, no change or provided positive feedback such as saying not to change the format. Of those who offered feedback most recommended making it Mac friendly. Other suggestions included: do not use orange font because it is hard to read, make the font size larger, shorten the text and just provide links, make it more visual, make it a PDF, make more items html and several suggested a general 'tune up' or making it less crowded.

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When readers were asked what they would like to see more of, interestingly, most responses mentioned items that are already included – funding and calls. Some suggestions that would fine tune what is already offered included: more NSF funding, VA funding, foundation funding, and non-governmental funding. There was also a great deal of conflicting feedback, most likely depending upon the reader's background. Many asked for more Macro information while even more asked for practice-related information. There was a great deal of call for more information about research findings. This included comments such as: information about translational research efforts, information about evidence-based practices/research findings, psychotherapy research findings, research findings from clinical trials and information about who has been funded and for what. Other information readers wanted to see more of included job announcements, a ranking of journals for publication that count toward tenure and the addition of a calendar feature for calls and conferences. Finally, there were quite a few comments asking for more online resources.

When asked about information they would like to see less of comments included: nominations (11), news (4), and NIH funding (4). Most comments said they liked information as it is.

Do you occasionally have technical difficulties with receiving your IASWR Listserv Announcements? Check all that apply.

Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents
No	294	77.98%	
Yes, I occasionally and/of often find it in my spam folder	58	15.38%	
Yes, it occasionally and/or often comes with strange formatting	23	6.1%	
Other (please specify)	10	2.65%	
(Did not answer)	1	0.27%	
Total Responses	386		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Multiple answers per participant possible. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

Additional Comments

86 respondents provided further comments. Of that 86, the majority (76.7%) provided positive feedback such as: look forward to receiving it, forward it on to my colleagues, find it invaluable, please do not change it, etc.

Summary and Future Directions

Overall it seems clear that the current format is preferred by most respondents. It would be worth looking into ways to make the email file smaller and making it compatible with a Mac. It is possible that making the document into a PDF may accomplish this, but it seems that turning it into an html file or using another email application may not necessarily be desirable to the readers. Most respondents specified that they appreciate the simple and straightforward style.

It was also apparent that many readers are not fully aware of the resources available to them through IASWR. Some comments asked for information about who is being funded or information about how to navigate through the NIH grant process. These are resources available to them on the website. Therefore, efforts should be made to figure out how to make that information more apparent.

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Finally, there was an overwhelming call for more online resources. Features such as the conference calendar, grant calendar and calls calendar would likely fulfill some of these needs. Also, respondents asked for more information about evidence-based research findings, which brings to mind an evidence-based research section to the website. This could be a place to direct users to further resources, a forum for social work researchers to bring us their published research findings, a list of vetted journal articles, or the like.

For more information contact Rebecca Hjelm, Program Associate, IASWR at rhjelm@naswdc.org.

* IASWR thanks the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for their assistance with the survey.