

Cheryl Dowd:

Great. Okay. Well, welcome everyone. This is the October Open Forum and our regular host, Kathryn Kerensky, cannot be with us today. So I'm stepping in. I'm Cheryl Dowd. I'm the Senior Director for the State Authorization Network and WCET Policy Innovations. So I welcome you and really happy to be able to do this session with you today. It's very exciting because this is a process and a project that we've been talking about for a number of years. But we're very fortunate that our colleague, Jana Walser-Smith, who's here with us today, is going to be able to talk about this very important project that she has been laboring over to develop an online course. And so we're going to talk about this online course, but those of you, I see some names on the call that remind me that you have participated perhaps in one of our Basics Workshops.

We had in-person Basics Workshops going back to 2015, I think. And at those Basics Workshops, we laid the foundation of the principles of state authorization, and we also did implementation. But what we're seeing now is there are so much involved in the foundation of the foundational principles of state authorization that we have created an online course that is going to be available for members to take. And we're going to go into the details in just a minute, but Jana has been working on this course for this past year. We have had beta testers working on it more recently, and we're going to be able to open the first cohort very soon, and we hope to have the registration open within the week. So I'm going to turn this over to Jana, who is our Director for Interstate Compliance and SAN Member Outreach, and she's going to give us more details about our new online course. Jana?

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Hello everyone, and welcome to the Open Forum. I was asked by Kathryn to come on and talk about what we've worked on, and when I say "we", Cheryl's been very generous in her description because this was truly a team effort. While I did a lot of the groundwork, everyone on this team, including Leigha, Kathryn, Cheryl, and I worked to put this thing together.

So let me start off by really talking a little bit about the course. We're calling the course a Member Integration Course, and we're saying member, and I'll talk a little bit about that in just a little bit. But it is a cohort-based course. It is designed to replace the new members course that we had, the webinar or the workshop. And it's again, designed to provide some basic information that talks about this work that we do. You'll have some information as it relates to the basics for state authorization.

There's a chapter in there or a module in there that speaks to website navigation, runs the gamut of negotiated rulemaking and that kind of thing. But I want to talk a little bit about how the course was designed. It's designed on a Canvas LMS. So I don't know how many of you have worked in Canvas, but if you have you know that Canvas courses are built on modules. And within those modules, each week we think about a subject matter or area for which you may need to concentrate. There'll be assignments related to that kind of material for the week. And then typically every week you're going to have a discussion component because that's just traditional in any course that you discuss with your peers and bounce ideas off of each other. And within some modules, there may be a quiz or something else, a short answer kind of submission that you'll have to do.

And the idea is that each week you learn material, you prove that you've mastered the material through the regurgitation of a discussion, or again, maybe a short answer. And within those tasks, you gather points. The whole idea of the course is that each of the members, you can gather up to a hundred points for the course, and there are opportunities for extra credit and that kind of thing. So you could conceivably have more than 100 points, but when looking at the assignments and looking at the tasks, if you take the course and gather more or gain more than 85 points, you'll receive a mastery certificate of completion, certificate of achievement.

So again, the idea is every week you're going to learn something. It's eight weeks, the eighth week is the final exam, and then it's comprehensive in nature. And then you go through and just work out all of the things that we've talked about. I think that each week you're going to be prepared for that final because we're going to review and you'll get feedback from members of the team. I think we are tag teaming this thing. And when I say tag teaming, Cheryl, Kathryn and I will be leading the discussions and responding. So we're just looking forward to people getting in there, digging into the material and just better understanding this work that we do. Cheryl?

Cheryl Dowd:

Sure. So you indicated that it's an eight-week course, but how long do you have to complete the course? So what is the structure for that?

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Sure. I appreciate that. It is the eight-week timeframe. So the course will typically, let's say it starts on a Monday. So a week will run, say if it starts on a Monday from Monday through Sunday. So you have all of those days to work on the material that's presented. Again, it's going to be you digging into the course materials and maybe PowerPoint presentations. It may be a video that you have to watch. You may have to do some reading.

But within that, you are able to look through the materials and work at your own pace. Each course, what we've done to help you plan for this is to say, "okay, for a person who may be new to this work, it may take you two and a half hours for that week's work." So each week we've provided individuals or learners with an anticipation of what kind of time it's going to take. And I say that with a little bit of trepidation because if we say, "oh, it's going to take you two hours" and then it takes you 45 minutes. It's going to be very much contingent upon your background, upon your experience and that kind of thing. But the idea again, is that each week you go through these materials, complete all the tasks that are asked, and then move to the next week. Again, culminating with that final exam in the eighth week.

Cheryl Dowd:

So you have a target audience for this course, I imagine. So who would that be and how much prior knowledge does the individual need to have to do this course?

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

When I wrote the syllabus, I wrote, "there are no prerequisites for the course". And when we looked at this thing, I was thinking, "okay, so this could be a course that's designed for someone who's new to this work, who knows nothing at all about why we do what we do, but is also a good opportunity to provide a refresher for those who may be upper level management who want to know more about what you do in the trenches." So I think this course could appeal to a gamut of people, a gamut of individuals. Again, anybody, any newbie to this work would really benefit from what we're offering because we do lay a solid foundation. Again, starting with some of the state authorization basics while we do what we do. And I think there's even a section that says why we comply, that kind of thing. But also, again, for maybe someone who's stepped away and is back in the field and needs a refresher. I think that appeal can go across the scale of who might want to take this, who might want to engage.

Cheryl Dowd:

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That's great. As I see here, some of the people that we have on the call today, I know some of them have attended the Basics Workshop, so I hope that they will share at their institution because it's not just the people who regularly engage with SAN, anybody at a SAN member institution is eligible to participate in the course because it's for all SAN members. Just reminds me of back in the day, someone will remember this, that we would have a variety of people who would attend the SAN Basics Workshop. Like people from general counsel's office, provost office, financial aid office, faculty. So we hope that those of you that have done the course before or done our Basics Workshop before will find that there's value for other folks at their institution. So Jana's lined this up really well that it would appeal to all those folks. So thank you for that, Jana.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Sure, sure.

Cheryl Dowd:

So is this course completely asynchronous?

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

It is. What I'd like to say is that there are going to be some components like discussions and that kind of thing that you're going to feel like are real time because our team, you, me, and Kathryn are going to be tag teaming and working within those discussions. And so it may be real time, but I don't want anyone to worry that you got to be at a certain place at a certain time for this online version. It is totally doable as an asynchronous course. There are no set times to meet, but we'll be in the course throughout the day providing the feedback, providing encouragement, that kind of thing.

Cheryl Dowd:

So let's get to the nuts and bolts here. We've had a colleague say, "is there a cost associated with this course?"

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Yeah. One of the things that we decided was that the cost needed to be minimal, and it just covers platform. It covers the text that's required that will be sent to you. So the cost is \$100.

Cheryl Dowd:

Thank you. And those that remember our in-person workshop, obviously we were at a location, we had additional location costs. But even when we moved to the virtual environment and did a Zoom structure, it was still more than this. We really tried to keep the costs down so that our members could participate in the course. So thank you for sharing that. So yes, it is a hundred dollars.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Sure.

Cheryl Dowd:

What was your process for developing the course?

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Well, when I took the role, that was one of the things that we really talked about. "What could we do to advance this already?" I mean, the course was already phenomenal. The workshop was already phenomenal, but my thought process was that I'm very visual, and then you may go to a workshop and you learn all these things, but is there a place that the information is housed? So in two weeks, if I forgot, "oh, she said, do this", where can I see that again? So the thought process is to have a platform where we could house this information where learners could go back at any point to reference something that they learned a week or so before. But also we thought to take this from an academic perspective. In other words, treat it like a true, true course. So when we started looking at some of those things, I started trying to group concepts.

One of the first things that I thought was going to be beneficial is that for those of you who stepped into a coordinator role, you immediately get an email from my colleague Leah Fletcher and now I think my name's on that message too. That talks about the member integration piece, and it talks to you about different things that you can find on our SAN website. I thought that was going to be instrumental in letting our learners know the SAN website is totally one of the most beneficial tools that's out there as it relates to this work.

So the first piece of this course is talking about some of those same things that you would've seen in that integration as far as navigating where can you find this on the SAN website, and those kinds of things. So it's heavily steeped and still taking you back to that website and taking you back to the tools and to the information that you are afforded just by being a member of SAN. The next thing that we wanted to do again, was talk about basics. And while we're doing that, Cheryl, if you don't mind, I think I'm going to just share the screen for just a second so that people can see just a glimpse into what we've done. So you let me know when we switched and you can see my screen.

Cheryl Dowd:

That's good. Yep, that's good.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

This is the homepage of the course. We're calling it the member integration. I purposely didn't call it a new members' integration because again, you might not be new to the work. You might just be wanting a refresher. So what you're seeing now is the beta testing edition. So we've got some people really testing this thing right now as we speak. And so again, it's set up just like any other Canvas course or a course would be on any other LMS. So one of the things that we've been really, really proud to do is make these different modules about just different aspects. So that first module, just like any other course you would take at a higher education institutional level, we talk about the SAN team. So you can click in there and about SAN, it talks about who we are, that kind of thing.

I wanted to show the relationship of WCET, W-C-E-T, and SAN. So you'll get some of that background in that module. And then I call this page, "Who Do You Turn To?" Because often if you're new to this organization, you may not necessarily know who handles what. So each individual on our team has a card on this page that talks a little bit about what Leah does, what Kathryn does, what Cheryl does, and again, what Jana does. And so it's just a brief overview of each of our roles. Also within that module, we've got individual videos and we talk to some of those same things. There's a module with course resources, just like you would see at any other course at any higher education institution. Instructor information, that's going to include information about me. It's going to have some information about Kathryn, also about Cheryl. There's a syllabus, there's a course schedule.

We've got a Muddiest Point Forum where if you've got questions you can ask there and some of your classmates may interject and that kind of thing. Just some basic information about building contact lists, that kind of thing. We've got a start here page. Welcome, course overview, just some general information. The learning objectives for the course are here. We talk about the minimum technical requirements, access to a computer with Office capabilities. There are several PowerPoints, PDFs, and that kind of thing. So we remind you that you need to have access to a PDF reader.

And then we talk about the text. And the text will be provided for each person who signs up and submits their registration fees. The next course is navigating. I talked a little bit about that, navigating the SAN website. There's a mini quiz, and the mini quiz within this module actually ask you to, "oh, go find this piece of information. What date is there? Where'd you find it?" That kind of thing. There's a module just about the state authorization overview. Again, why we comply, the foundations of state auth, those kinds of things. We've got sections, for example, digging deeper, here's some more information about why we do what we do. There's some videos that... And we're buffering, but there's some videos and the like that you need to better understand.

But anyway, each section... Someone's calling me on the computer, so sorry for that. But each section has, for example, on this module two, there's a bonus section. So if you felt like you didn't do as well on the quiz, you have an opportunity to gain bonus points. Again, still working towards at least those 85 points. We've got a section on reciprocity. There's some videos there from even back to Marshall Hill because it still contains some really good information. We also offer a section where if we're introducing a concept, we say, "oh, here's some suggested vocabulary that you might need for this module." And you'll see there's a section within the course that has tons and tons and tons of vocabulary and concepts. So again, each module just builds upon different aspects of what we do. Federal regs, negotiated rulemaking, professional licensure, and we can go on and on. But again, eight modules built on concepts that are going to be detrimental to doing this work.

Cheryl Dowd:

Well, that's great. So that covers a lot of that foundational principles that we talk about. And when we were doing the Basics Workshop, we did, we covered these foundational principles and it kept growing so that our day and a half together when we were doing it in person was really getting difficult to put in all of the information. So this is nice that Jana can lay it out and we can go through it in a more timely fashion. So we're having some questions about when the first cohort will be available and how will that work?

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

So Yolanda, thank you for that question. What we've decided, so that we can give everyone the individual attention that they're going to need, the initial cohorts we're going to have about 50 people. Again, Cheryl, Kathryn and I are going to be running through that and managing the discussion responses and that kind of thing for the 50 people. We anticipate that that new cohort or the first cohort will go live early January, I think the second week of January is what we've decided.

Cheryl Dowd:

Yep.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

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So if anyone's interested, again, Cheryl touched on it today. I think we're going to have registration open this week. Is that correct?

Cheryl Dowd:

At least by next week. Certainly before annual meeting. So no later than next week.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

So we'll put something out on mix so you'll know that the registration is open. But yeah, we are looking forward to getting these cohorts off and running. So let's talk a little bit about that. So we'll have that first cohort in January. It'll run for eight weeks, and then I think we wait a couple of weeks and we start another one. So the idea is that we'll have three cohorts by fall of 2024. Then after that fall cohort goes over, we'll have an opportunity to come together face-to-face and through the other portions of what this course always did historically. In other words, we get together, we talk about mentoring, we talk about hands-on how to apply some of these concepts that you've learned throughout the course. So again, we're going to have that in-person face-to-face component in the fall of 2024, but you would've had to complete this Canvas course before attending that.

Cheryl Dowd:

I'm glad you brought that up, Jana. So it really is looking like a two-parter. So you have the foundational principles, and then we'll have an implementation in-person optional workshop, but it will just be eligible for those who completed the course to be eligible to come out. We'll hold it out in Boulder at the Learning Center in the office in Boulder. That's in my background there. And so that will look more like our former Basics Workshops where we have mentors, one mentor for every roughly 10 people to talk about how you implement what you learned in the foundational principles. So that workshop will be an optional workshop for implementation, and it'll be held in the fall, as Jana said. So we're looking forward to that. Somebody asked about, will there be access to retain the content after eight weeks?

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

After eight weeks? And Leanne, thanks for that question because what we will do is that we'll put each of those 50 people in a cohort, and then those individuals will have access to the course after your course is over. I think we hadn't talked about it much as a team, but I think we could probably leave that open for at least six months to a year, because each time we'll start a new cohort. So others will start on new information. So Leanne, thank you for that. Thank you, Ricky, for your comments. Yolanda, "Will this take the place of the Basics Workshop?" Yes. Or serve as an alternative. Again, I think Cheryl touched on that just a little bit, Yolanda, just now. You'll do this portion and then we'll still have that basics in-person workshop to provide that opportunity for networking, for getting that mentorship relationship started. Okay. And Laura-

Cheryl Dowd:

And somebody asked about, I think it was Yolanda's part two of her question about Advanced Topics. And we do plan to, we're returning to an in-person Advanced Topics Workshop. Those of you may have seen in mix today that we get to come back in person for an Advanced Topics Workshop. We're planning that for March, early March. Jana and I have been communicating with the Chicago School, one of our newer members, and they're collaborating with us to host the Advanced Topics Workshop in Anaheim, California in March. And so look for that registration also to be coming up probably late October. And somebody asked about when will the announcement registration be open? You'll see a registration for

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this Basics Workshop, or excuse me, this integration online course no later than next week. And then the Advanced Topics Workshop will be in-person with that registration opening by the end of the month. So we are very excited that we're getting these trainings back up and running. We've improved from Zoom to this online course, and we get to go back to an in-person workshop for Advanced Topics.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Perfect. Perfect. And I know we only have a couple of minutes left, but I would encourage you if you have questions or if you think of something afterwards, reach out. I'm happy to field those questions and happy to provide you with any incremental information that we didn't get to cover in this short 30 minutes.

Cheryl Dowd:

Any final questions? So we are very excited. So those of you that have been members for a while will recall that we had two different types of training. We had basics and advanced. And advanced, the topics changed depending on what was timely. And so what is timely now is addressing all of the federal activity. And so that will be what the Advanced Topics Workshop is about. The exact content is still a question mark as we wait for rules to be released before November 1. So we'll see what that looks like and the curriculum will be responding to that as well as guidance that's been released in the last year and how that may impact and any new rulemaking that we see on the docket coming forward. So that will be the Advanced Topics. The Basics Workshop. Yes, there are a few new things here and there, but it stays very steady in wanting to make sure that everyone understands the foundational principles.

So we're looking forward to offering all of those cohorts. The next one will be later in April, and then one starting in July. So there will be three cohorts of 50. We will cap it at 50. If a colleague of yours is not able to get in, no worries. The next cohort will start. We can have them join in then. And then we will be talking more about what this in-person workshop looks like, probably late October, early November of next year in Boulder. So any final words? Jana, I want to give you the final words.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

No, I think you've done a nice job of summing it up. I think that people should also, I can't hype up enough the excitement I have for the course, but I'm also excited for the Advanced Topics that we're working on. It's slated for Anaheim so you can get the kids and bring them to Disneyland. So plan to be in Anaheim in March with us. And so yeah, we're just looking forward to it.

Cheryl Dowd:

So look for announcements soon in mix. And thank you all for being on the call today. Really appreciate it. And look forward to November. In November we'll be talking about federal activity. So looking forward to November as well. Thanks Jana for all this great information. Appreciate it.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

And your meeting still time to sign up for the annual meeting.

Cheryl Dowd:

Yep. Look forward to seeing some people too. Yep. Thank you.

Jana Walser-Smith, Director:

Take good care.

Cheryl Dowd:

Thanks, Ricky.