



Key Message

Accessing applications for military spouses is often a barrier to making use of the state laws that are designed to ease license transfer. States can reduce obstacles spouses experience when applying under state laws by posting easily accessible website content specific to military spouses.

Analysis

The Defense Department is asking state policymakers to assess the actions of licensing boards to encourage implementation of changes to laws and regulatory policy. States can support military families by ensuring that information about licensure is easily accessible.

The Defense-State Liaison Office contracted with Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State to examine Military Spouse License Portability. The August 2021 report, which can be accessed at <https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/mslp-report-15aug2021.pdf>, concluded that finding military spouse-specific guidance about applying for an occupational license was extremely difficult.

- Only about 35% of the boards had information on websites specific to military spouse license and credential portability.
- 33% of examined boards listed “Military Spouse” on their homepage or in other easy-to-find locations on their websites.
- In a 2017 study by the University of Minnesota, 44% of boards were not accessible on the first attempt. And customer service representatives were most often not aware of the legislation specific to military spouses.

FOR POLICYMAKERS

The DOD is asking state policymakers to assess the actions of licensing boards to encourage the implementation of changes to laws and regulatory policies. Efforts to improve programs and policies could include:

- Collaborating with occupational boards to prominently display information on websites about accommodations for military spouses who are transferring their licenses and credentials due to relocations
- Encouraging occupational board executive directors to include questions that inquire about military spouse status on all licensure applications – electronic or paper – especially for applications to transfer licenses and credentials from another jurisdiction
- Collaborating with occupational licensing boards to collect annual data regarding the number of military spouses that use different processes of transfer (endorsement, temporary licenses and expedited licenses)