



## Key Message

Military families are at a disadvantage when it comes to school enrollment options due to military-directed assignments. States can provide military families with improved schooling options by modifying open enrollment policies.

## Discussion Points

1. Military families have limited housing options when moving to a new location as part of a permanent change of station. As a result, school and district options for military children can also be limited.
  - Many military families must move from temporary to permanent housing at some point after school has started or from permanent to temporary housing prior to moving out of state on military orders.
  - Some families have no choice but to live in military housing due to command requirements, meaning they may not have the schooling/ placement options available to other students.
2. School district policies addressing class and school capacity limits, short application timeframes and tuition requirements inadvertently create more barriers for military families trying to access open enrollment programs.
3. States have begun to adopt policies that specifically address the open enrollment needs of military children. These include:
  - **Military Clause:** This provision increases military family access to interdistrict and intradistrict transfer options by allowing for automatic eligibility, exempting application deadlines and other requirements to accommodate the timing of military moves, or prohibiting districts from denying an application for interdistrict or intradistrict transfers by military children.
  - **Placement Stability Provision:** This provision allows a military child to enroll and attend school outside of the zoned area of their temporary lodging/housing based on anticipated permanent residence in military housing or in the community; or permits them to remain in their current school placement despite a change of residence prior to the end of the school year or prior to graduation if they are a high school junior or senior.
  - **Military Priority Category:** This provision mitigates the lack of access to interdistrict and intradistrict transfer programs (due to capacity limits and application windows) by including military students as a priority group within existing open enrollment prioritization systems (such as what is provided for siblings, children of employees and foster/homeless youth).



Open enrollment is a form of K-12 public school choice that allows students to attend a different school than the one to which they are assigned based on their place of residence.

Most states have one or more policies providing for varying degrees of open enrollment, but they can differ greatly across state and even district lines. These policies can be mandatory or voluntary for the school or district; may apply to interdistrict transfers or be limited to intradistrict transfers; and may provide priority to students who are part of designated categories.