



Key Message

Thirty-five percent of military spouses require an occupational license to work in their chosen profession. Licensure compacts create seamless licensure portability for all members of a profession, including military spouses and service members. By adopting licensure compacts, states can improve military family financial readiness.

Discussion Points

There are more than 561,000¹ active-duty military spouses, and supporting them is vital to the readiness and retention of military personnel.

While the Defense Department is working to reduce discretionary moves, military families remain highly mobile and are reassigned to a new duty station every two or three years, on average. This level of mobility creates barriers to employment and career development for military spouses, especially those in licensed professions.

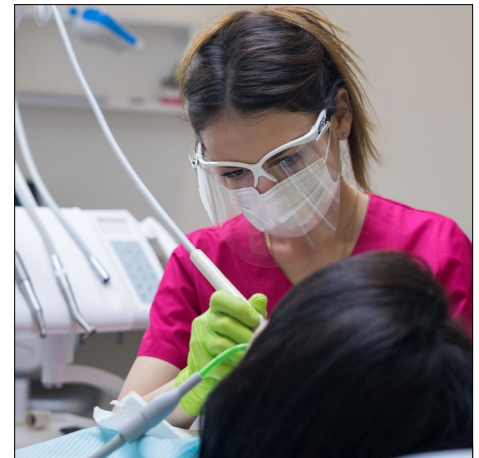
Occupational Licensure Interstate compacts are the gold standard for license portability. The FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act established a cooperative agreement between the department and the Council of State Governments to develop compacts for professions with a high concentration of military spouses.

The Servicemember Civil Relief Act² gives precedent to the use of compacts for military and military spouse licensure.

Compacts offer several key benefits:

1. Compacts developed through the cooperative agreement allow military spouses to designate a home state for their license, or use a multistate licensing model, ensuring seamless licensure with each military move.
2. Licensure compacts are developed through an extensive stakeholder-informed and consensus-based process from the existing policies across states. Compacts are specific to the needs of each profession.
3. Compacts preserve state sovereignty by establishing a framework for state-to-state cooperation. States determine and enforce the scope of practice and state regulations.
4. Interstate compacts are the most powerful, durable and adaptive tools for ensuring cooperative action among the states. Unlike federally imposed mandates, interstate compacts provide a state-developed structure for collaborative and dynamic action, while building consensus among the states.
5. Compacts are a proven means of collective governance by the states that is recognized under the U.S. Constitution.

The Defense-State Liaison Office assists national organizations, state boards and member associations in educating legislators on the benefits of compacts – especially those developed under the cooperative agreement – to the military community.



According to the Office of People Analytics³ 2024 Survey of Active Duty Spouses, 28% of military spouses who experienced a PCS move needed to acquire new licensure/certification at the new location. And of all the military spouses, 35% require a state-issued occupational license to practice their chosen profession.

¹ 2023 Demographics Profile of the Military Community: <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2023-demographics-report.pdf>

² 50 USC 4025a: Portability of professional licenses of servicemembers and their spouses: <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=%28title%3A50%20section%3A4025a%20edition%3Aprelim%29%20OR%20%28granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title50-section4025a%29&f=tree&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true>

³ Spouse Survey: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/data-research-and-statistics/survey-findings/spouse-survey/>.