



Key Message

Although federal law requires states to recognize out-of-state credentials, service members and military spouses can still face employment barriers if they do not hold an in-state license for the state where they work. States can close this gap by issuing in-state licenses within 30 days and mandating annual data reporting to expose administrative delays, track why applicants are denied, and hold the licensing process accountable.

Discussion Points

In 2021, Congress recommended that the War Department create a mechanism to measure whether state licensure actions are improving military spouses' experiences.¹ The data can only be stored at the state level. Reporting on applications, processing times, credentials issued and reasons for denials helps state policymakers measure whether state actions are improving the military family experience.

In 2024, Congress amended the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, or SCRA.² The amendment includes that a license held by a service member or military spouse in good standing in another state should be recognized as valid in the new state upon application.

In 2025, the U.S. Department of Justice recommended to states that they issue a new in-state license to qualified SCRA applicants as a best practice. Or, in the alternative, provide documentation showing that the existing license is valid in the new state.³

The Uniform Law Commission's 2026 model Act on this issue addresses both gaps.⁴ The Act creates a uniform process for state issuance of an in-state credential to qualifying SCRA applicants within 30 days. The Act also establishes a reporting framework requiring states to publish annual data on applications, processing times, credentials issued and reasons for denials in an easily accessible format.



A DOW study revealed that just 35% of licensing boards nationwide publicly reported data on licensing outcomes for service members and spouses, while only 66% provided a pathway for military spouses to begin working within 30 days.⁵

¹GAO-21-193, Military Spouse Employment: DOD Should Continue Assessing State Licensing Practices and Increase Awareness of Resources (January 2021): <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-193>

²50 U.S.C. § 4025a: Portability of professional licenses of servicemembers and their spouses (as amended by Pub. L. 118-159, Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, Dec. 23, 2024): <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title50-section4025a&num=0&edition=prelim>

³U.S. Department of Justice, Professional License Portability (December 2025): <https://www.justice.gov/servicemembers/professional-license-portability>

⁴Uniform Law Commission, Occupational Licenses of Servicemembers and Military Spouses Act: <https://www.uniformlaws.org/committees/community-home?CommunityKey=ba1ecc93-efe3-418d-95d5-018d1d2abaf8>

⁵Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Pennsylvania State University, Military Spouse License Portability Assessment: <https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/link/mslp/>