



Key Message

Military-directed moves frequently disadvantage military families navigating school enrollment options for their children. States can assist by increasing military-connected students' access to schooling options, allowing them to remain in their current school placement despite a relocation from temporary to permanent housing, and including them within existing enrollment prioritization systems.

Discussion Points

1. Due to housing shortages in areas near military installations, military families may have limited housing options when moving to a new location as part of a permanent change of station. As a result, flexible schooling options, including public, charter and magnet schools for military children, can also be limited.
 - Many military families may 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 mission requirements, meaning they may not be able to access school options available to other students.
2. Due to the timing of military moves, state and local open enrollment policies that limit application windows can inadvertently create obstacles for military families seeking to access open enrollment programs.
3. The War Department provides education-related resources to connect families, schools, installation leadership and community partners with trusted advisors who help navigate school enrollment, but we need state policy support to ensure that military-connected children can thrive academically through every move and milestone.
4. States are continuing 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 an anticipated permanent residence; 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 open enrollment policies (due to capacity limits and application windows) by including military students as a priority group within existing open enrollment, magnet school, and charter school 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; may apply to interdistrict transfers or be limited to intradistrict transfers; may include magnet or charter schools; and may provide priority to students who are part of designated categories.