



## Best Practices: Military Spouse Occupational Licensure Access

### *Key Message:*

Accessing applications and information is often a barrier for military spouses to utilizing state laws that are designed to ease license transfer. Many states have reduced this barrier by posting easily accessible website content specific to military spouses.

### *Principles:*

The Department of Defense 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.

As an indicator of board implementation of licensing policies modified to support military spouses, the Defense-State Liaison Office contracted with the University of Minnesota in 2017 to review the outcome of state policy changes at the board level

(<https://reachfamiliesd7.umn.edu/research/document/13865>). The University of Minnesota evaluated the actions taken by six boards in each of the 50 states to indicate the level of implementation of the revised laws by occupational boards.

- Only about 40% of boards had information on websites specific to military spouse license and credential portability.
- Of the boards, 44% were not accessible on the first attempt. 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 implementation of changes to laws and regulatory policy. 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



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- 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)

### ***For Agencies/Regulators and Boards:***

- Include a question about military spouse status on all licensure applications in order for all applications to be provided proper routing.
- Clearly identify military spouse licensing information on licensing board and/or state agency website menus. Ensure that the information is searchable from the main search box.
- Help staff understand state legislation regarding the portability of military spouse licensure and train staff on their ability to support military spouses during the process.
- Identify a specific staff member with training and expertise to serve as a point of contact for military spouses.

### ***Examples of Best Practices:***

The California Department of Consumer Affairs website, <https://www.dca.ca.gov/licensees/index.shtml>, features a link to information for “Military Personnel and their Spouses/Domestic Partners” on its licensees page. This page is easily accessible from the homepage.

The Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies’ Division of Professions and Occupations features a link on the homepage of its website, <https://www.colorado.gov/dora>, to “Career Transition for Military, Spouses and Veterans.”

The Florida Department of Health Veterans Application for Licensure Online Response website, <http://www.flhealthsource.gov/valor>, provides a tab specifically for military spouses.

The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation provides frequently asked questions and supplemental forms at <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/military.htm>.

The Washington State Department of Health has a military liaison who provides individualized support to veterans, members of the military and military spouses regarding licensing requirements for health professions.



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### Washington: Laws of 2017, Chapter 184 (Senate Bill 5359.)

<http://lawfilesexternal.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2017-18/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5359.SL.pdf#page=1>

An act relating to requiring annual reporting on the implementation of laws to streamline licensing processes for military service members and their spouses and amending Revised Code of Washington 73.04.150.3 Section 1. RCW 73.04.150 and 2005 c 141 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) There is hereby created a joint committee on veterans' and military affairs. The committee shall consist of: (a) Eight members of the Senate appointed by the president of the Senate, four of whom shall be members of the majority party and four of whom shall be members of the minority party; and (b) eight members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker, four of whom shall be members of the majority party and four of whom shall be members of the minority party. Members of the committee shall be appointed before the close of the 2005 legislative session, and before the close of each regular session during an odd-numbered year thereafter. (2) Each member's term of office shall run from the close of the session in which he or she was appointed until the close of the next regular session held in an odd-numbered year. If a successor is not appointed during a session, the member's term shall continue until the member is reappointed or a successor is appointed. The term of office for a committee member who does not continue as a member of the Senate or House of Representatives shall cease upon the convening of the next session of the legislature during an odd-numbered year after the member's appointment, or upon the member's resignation, whichever is earlier.

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Vacancies on the committee shall be filled by appointment in the same manner as described in Subsection (1) of this section. All such vacancies shall be filled from the same political party and from the same house as the member whose seat was vacated.

(3) The committee shall establish an executive committee of four members, two of whom are members of the Senate and two of whom are members of the House of Representatives. The executive committee shall appoint one co-chair from the two executive committee members who are senators and one co-chair from the two executive committee members who are representatives. The two co-chairs shall be from different political parties and their terms



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of office shall run from the close of the session in which they are appointed until the close of the next regular session in an odd-numbered year. The executive committee is responsible for performing all general administrative and personnel duties assigned to it in the rules and procedures adopted by the joint committee, as well as other duties delegated to it by the joint committee.

- (4) The joint committee on veterans and military affairs has the following powers and duties:
  - (a) To study veterans' issues, active military forces issues, and National Guard and Reserve Component issues, and make recommendations to the legislature
  - (b) To study structure and administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the military department, and make recommendations to the legislature
- (5) The joint committee shall adopt rules and procedures for its orderly operation. The joint committee may create subcommittees to perform duties under this section.
- (6) The regulating authorities for the Department of Licensing and the Department of Health shall file reports to the legislature biennially and the Washington State Military Transition Council annually beginning January 1, 2018, and appear annually before the Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, to provide updates on progress in their efforts to implement the requirements of Chapter 3818.340 RCW, Chapter 32, Laws of 2011, and Chapter 351, Laws of 2011. By January 1, 2018, the Department of Labor and Industries and the Professional Educator Standards Board must each submit a report to the legislature, including an assessment on how its licensing, certification and apprenticeship programs apply training and experience acquired by military members and their spouses outside of Washington, and recommendations about whether such programs should be included in the reporting schedule within this subsection.