



OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

ASSESSING STATE POLICY AND PRACTICE



Over the last 60 years, the number of jobs requiring an occupational license, or government approval to practice a profession, has grown from about one in 20 to nearly one in four. When implemented properly, occupational licensing can help protect the health and safety of consumers by requiring practitioners to undergo a designated amount of training and education in their field. However, differences and disparities in occupational licensing laws across states can create barriers for those looking to enter the labor market and make it harder for workers to relocate across state lines. Certain populations—including military spouses and families, immigrants with work authorization, people with criminal records, and unemployed and dislocated workers—are affected especially hard by the requirements and variances of occupational licensing.

EMPLOYED WORKERS

25.5% HAVE A
CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

2.7% FOR LICENSED JOBSEEKERS
6.1% FOR UNLICENSED JOBSEEKERS

To begin looking for solutions to these problems, the National Conference of State Legislatures, or NCSL, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, NGA Center, and The Council of State Governments, or CSG, are launching a three-year project entitled *Occupational Licensing: Assessing State Policy and Practice*, with the goal of enhancing the portability of occupational licenses. This work is made possible through a grant from the U. S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

Primary Objectives of the Project

- » Identify licensing criteria to ensure that existing and new licensing requirements are not overly broad, burdensome or restrictive, and that they do not create unnecessary barriers to labor market entry;
- » Improve the portability and reciprocity provisions for selected occupations across state lines.

For information on the Occupational Licensing project, please visit www.ncsl.org/stateslicense or contact Suzanne Hultin at 303.856.1531 or suzanne.hultin@ncsl.org.

The *Occupational Licensing* project includes the following major activities:

Research Database on the Current State Occupational Licensing Landscape

This project will identify and evaluate the licensing requirements for 34 occupations across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A comparison database will look at the criteria—including work experience requirements, fees and applications, personal background documentation, licensure portability and other requirements—for each of the 34 occupations. This research will result in the National Occupational Licensing Database, which will help inform the work of the project and broaden the understanding of the barriers, challenges and opportunities related to occupational licensing. Additional reports on special populations—military spouses and veterans, unemployed or dislocated workers, immigrants with work authorization and individuals with criminal records—will also be made available.

Engage States through Occupational Licensing Policy Consortium

The *Occupational Licensing* project will engage a select group of states in a structured peer learning consortium with technical assistance support from the partner organizations. Through a competitive application process, 11 states were selected to join the consortium. The participating states—**Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Nevada, Utah and Wisconsin**—will become familiar with occupational licensing policy in their own state, learn about occupational licensing best practices in other states, and begin implementing actions to remove barriers to labor market entry and improve portability and reciprocity.

Each state has formed a project team to include representation from relevant stakeholders involved in occupational licensing, including: state legislators, the governor's office, state workforce agencies, state regulatory or licensing boards, and state administrative agencies involved in occupational licensing.

Consortium states will benefit from:

- » Multi-state team meetings
- » In-state learning consortium meetings
- » Targeted, state-specific technical assistance
- » Support for state action plan development and implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE

June 2017	Request for Proposals from state teams opens
August 2017	Request for Proposals due from states
December 2017	Release of National Occupational Licensing Database
December 2017	First Multi-State Consortium featuring licensure experts and team time to develop state action plans
March 2018	Release of interstate licensure compact resources
July 2018	Release of four population-specific reports (military families, dislocated workers, immigrants with work authorizations and individuals with criminal records)
Fall 2018	Second Multi-State Consortium Meeting
Summer 2019	Third Multi-State Consortium Meeting
2017–2019	Ongoing webinar series on policy issues regarding occupational licensing
2018–2019	Ongoing in-state technical assistance for consortium states
2017–2019	Ongoing blogs, newsletters and magazine articles on the project and licensure policy issues
December 2019	Final report on lessons learned and state progress on action plans
December 2019	Process established to develop licensure compact

OCCUPATIONS

Barbers
Bus Driver (City/Transit)
Bus Drivers, School or Special Client
Construction Managers *
Construction and Building Inspectors*
Dental Hygienists*
Electricians*
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics*
Hairdressers, Hairstylists and Cosmetologists*
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers*
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers *
Insurance Sales Agents
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses*
Manicurists and Pedicurists*
Massage Therapists*
Nursing Assistants*
Occupational Therapy Assistants
Pharmacy Technicians
Physical Therapy Assistants*
Pipefitters and Steamfitters
Plumbers*
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
Private Detectives and Investigators
Radiologic Technologists
Real Estate Appraisers*
Real Estate Sales Agents *
Respiratory Therapists*
Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers *
Security Guards*
Skin care Specialists*
Teacher Assistants
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians
Vocational Education Teachers, Postsecondary
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators *

* Asterisk denotes occupations one or more consortium state plans to address