

Comparing Universal Licensure Recognition and Interstate Compacts

In recent years, states have worked to reduce barriers to interstate mobility for licensed professionals through **interstate licensure compacts**—statutorily enacted agreements among states allowing licensees to practice across state lines—and **universal license recognition laws**, in which a single state determines its unique process to grant a license by endorsement to a license holder from another state or territory. These policies help to solve similar problems, but there are several major differences. Notably, compacts are tailored to a particular profession *and* allow licensees to engage in interstate practice in all compact member states, whereas universal recognition laws attempt to account for most or all professions a state regulates, but only with regard to practice within that state’s borders. The following chart provides a summary comparison of some of the benefits states may realize from each policy.

#	Criteria	Universal Recognition	Interstate Compact
1	Requires practitioners to abide by the scope of practice of the state in which they are practicing	Yes	Yes
2	Allows for expeditious interstate movement of practitioners during emergencies	Yes	Yes
3	Reduces barriers for <i>out-of-state</i> practitioners aiming to practice within your state ¹	Yes	Yes
4	Reduces barriers for <i>in-state</i> practitioners aiming to practice in multiple states	No	Yes
5	Allows military spouses to maintain a single home-state license for the duration of the servicemember’s active duty, regardless of relocations, without submitting a separate application to each state’s licensure board ²	No	Yes
6	Allows practitioners to work in multiple states, both in person and via telehealth/telework, without submitting a separate application to each state’s licensure board, requiring verification of the current license, or obtaining a new background check	No	Yes
7	Brings together a coalition of states to establish consistent and enforceable interstate licensure standards that are tailored to the public protection requirements of a given profession	No	Yes
8	Enhances public protection by creating a multi-state database of licensure information to facilitate collaboration on license verification and investigations of potential misconduct	No	Yes
9	Allows multistate practice without requiring the practitioner to change state of residence ³	Sometimes	Yes

¹ Some states’ universal recognition laws require an out-of-state practitioner to relocate permanently to the state in question.

² If relocating to a compact member state. Verification based on practitioner complying with compact criteria for privilege to practice in another member state.

³ Applicable when practitioner travels from one compact member state to another compact member state.

* Some states’ universal recognition laws, such as those in Iowa and Arizona, require the practitioner to reside in the state while others, such as Colorado’s and Idaho’s, do not.