




TAKE ACTION TOOLKIT

Making the Most of Your Professional
Licenses and Certifications



**NATIONAL
MILITARY FAMILY
ASSOCIATION**

For Military Spouses

A woman with a braid is working at a computer in an office setting. She is looking at the screen and has her hand on the mouse. In the background, there are other people working at computers.

Military spouses earn 26.8% less in income than their non-military counterparts, which adds up to \$12,374 per year in lost wages.

Hey Military Spouse,

We know that frequent PCS moves across state lines make it hard for you to keep your professional and occupational licenses and certifications current. The process is a constant cycle of time-consuming tasks and pocket-emptying fees just to continue working in your career field.

You want to work. We want to help.

Are you ready to take action and make the process work for you? This toolkit has you covered with some key steps and resources to help you become your best advocate and take charge of your professional career.

Military Spouse Professionals At-a-Glance

Whether you're getting licensed for the first time, or transferring your credentials for the 10th time, it isn't always smooth sailing for military spouse professionals. Have you experienced any of these stages before?



The Unemployed or Underemployed Spouse

They are licensed or certified in a particular occupation but have not been able to find a job using their credentials or are working in a job not directly using their credentials.



First Time License or Certification Spouse

This spouse has never been licensed in their profession and is going through the application process to obtain credentials for the first time.



The PCS Transfer Spouse

They have been credentialed in their field, possibly worked in their field for multiple years, and now are moving due to their military member's PCS orders. They may or may not have been through the process of transferring their credentials, but they know they can't guarantee the process will be smooth sailing for yet another PCS.

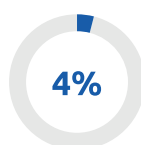
Why Relicensing is a Problem for Military Spouses

Problem One: The Process is Time-Consuming

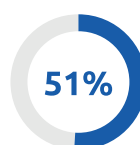
“I've had to deal with discrimination in hiring practices and not being able to maintain employment due to my spouse's deployments, increased demand at work, and limited child care options.”

Meara O., Nurse

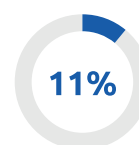
Average time it took to relicense, transfer, or renew a credential



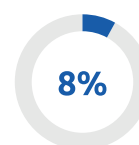
Less than one month



1 – 6 months



7 – 12 months



Greater than 12 months

Survey participants are NMFA Spouse Scholarship Recipients who used funding towards professional license and certification fees



26% of NMFA Scholarship Recipients said their new state did NOT provide resources or information to help them renew or transfer their license or certification.

Interstate Compacts Provide Relief

Occupational interstate compacts allow a military spouse with an occupational license or certification in one compact state to practice in another participating state through “privilege to practice” policies. States voluntarily sign onto each compact to allow spouses to take advantage of the state-to-state reciprocity.

These compacts can help alleviate some of the stress and loss of time it takes to start working in your career field after a PCS move.

“We have moved seven times and it has been nearly impossible to even attempt recertification. Sadly, I had to walk away from teaching due to this.”
Jenny M., Teacher

Current Occupational Interstate Compacts



Physical Therapy Licensure Compact



Enhanced Nursing Licensure Compact



Interstate Compact for EMS



Interstate Medical Licensure Compact



Interjurisdictional Compact for Psychology



Advance Practice RN Compact

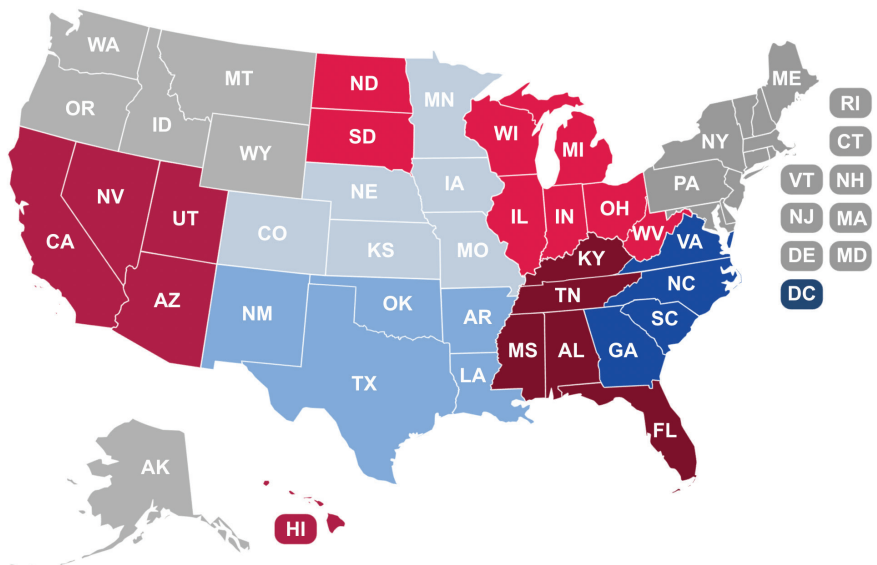


Audiology & Speech Language Pathology Compact

Stay on Top of the Latest Legislation in Your State

Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO) DSLO’s key issue status tracker is a great resource provided by Military OneSource that addresses advances made on key issues in each state.

Visit StatePolicy.MilitaryOneSource.mil to view the key issues and find your DSLO State representative.



Tip: You don't have to stop with your state legislator, reach out to your state's licensing board and encourage them to create military-specific pages on their websites.



Share Your Story and Create Impact

Once you've identified your regional Defense-State Liaison Office representative, send them an email or letter telling them the challenges you've faced trying to continue your career after moving to their state, and suggest recommendations that might make the process easier for future military spouses moving there.

You can make that letter do extra work if you send it to your state legislator, too. Visit OpenStates.org/Find_Your_Legislator/

Need some guidance for what your letter should say? We've created two sample letters to guide you.

PENDING LEGISLATION

Sample Letter Guide

Dear Representative/Senator Smith,

I'm writing to request your vote in favor of (state action).

My name is (your name), and I am a military spouse and a (your occupation).

As you consider this state action, I believe it's important to let you know how passing (state action) would positively impact my life and career as well as that of other military spouses who also work in (your occupation).

In closing, I want to thank you for your support of the military community and (the local community where you're stationed).

Sincerely,

Your Name

Include information about how long you've been in your career and how long you've been a military spouse.

Include information about moves, deployments and other challenges you've faced while working in your field.

Include details about how the state's action to pass would benefit you personally, as well as other spouses in your same profession.

Mention how long you've lived in the community and that you will continue to follow the state's action on this issue and let them know you would like to hear back from the Representative.

Be sure to include your contact information.

GENERAL CONCERN

Sample Letter Guide

Dear Representative/Senator Smith,

I'm writing to inform you about an issue I've faced as a new military spouse in your state.

My name is (your name), and I am a military spouse and a (your occupation).

I believe it's important to let you know how much it would mean to me and my military family for you to help people like me, who the military moves from state to state, maintain my career. Transient, working professionals, like me need to be able to more easily access reciprocity with occupational licenses and certifications so we can continue to work and support our families.

In closing, I want to thank you for your support of the military community and (the local community where you're stationed).

Sincerely,

Your Name

Include information about how long you've been in your career and how long you've been a military spouse.

Include information about moves, deployments and other challenges you've faced while working in your field.

Include details about how the Representative's help in getting new legislation passed or creating/updating laws around professional licenses would benefit you personally, as well as other spouses in your same profession.

Mention how long you've lived in the community and that you will continue to follow the state's action on this issue and let them know you would like to hear back from the Representative.

Be sure to include your contact information.

Why Relicensing is a Problem for Military Spouses

Problem Two: The Process is Expensive (But We Can Help!)

We know it's costly to keep your credentials up-to-date, especially when moving with your service member every 2-3 years. Fortunately, there's some financial relief available for families who have emptied their pockets to keep a military spouse's professional license.

Reimbursements

A pilot program—slated to continue through 2024—will reimburse service members up to \$1,000 for re-licensing expenses incurred by their spouse due to PCS orders to a new state. You may qualify for reimbursement through your service branch. Visit [MilitaryFamily.org/Licensing-Certification-Resources](https://militaryfamily.org/licensing-certification-resources) to learn more about each branch's reimbursement policy.

Scholarships

The National Military Family Association offers scholarships for military spouses seeking additional funding for obtaining and renewing professional credentials. Our scholarships are not limited to four-year degrees—they can be used for licensing fees, testing costs, renewal fees, supervision hours, and more.

Apply for an NMFA Scholarship and view our other partner offers at [MilitaryFamily.org](https://militaryfamily.org)

MyCAA

My Career Advancement Account Scholarship Program is a workforce development program that provides financial assistance for degrees, licenses, and certifications to help pursue an occupation or career field.



The GI Bill

Some license and certification fees can be covered by the G.I. Bill and Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, which have helped qualifying Veterans and their family members get money to cover all or some of the costs for school or training.



Military Relief Societies:

- Air Force Aid Society
- Army Emergency Relief
- Coast Guard Mutual Assistance
- Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society



Local Resources

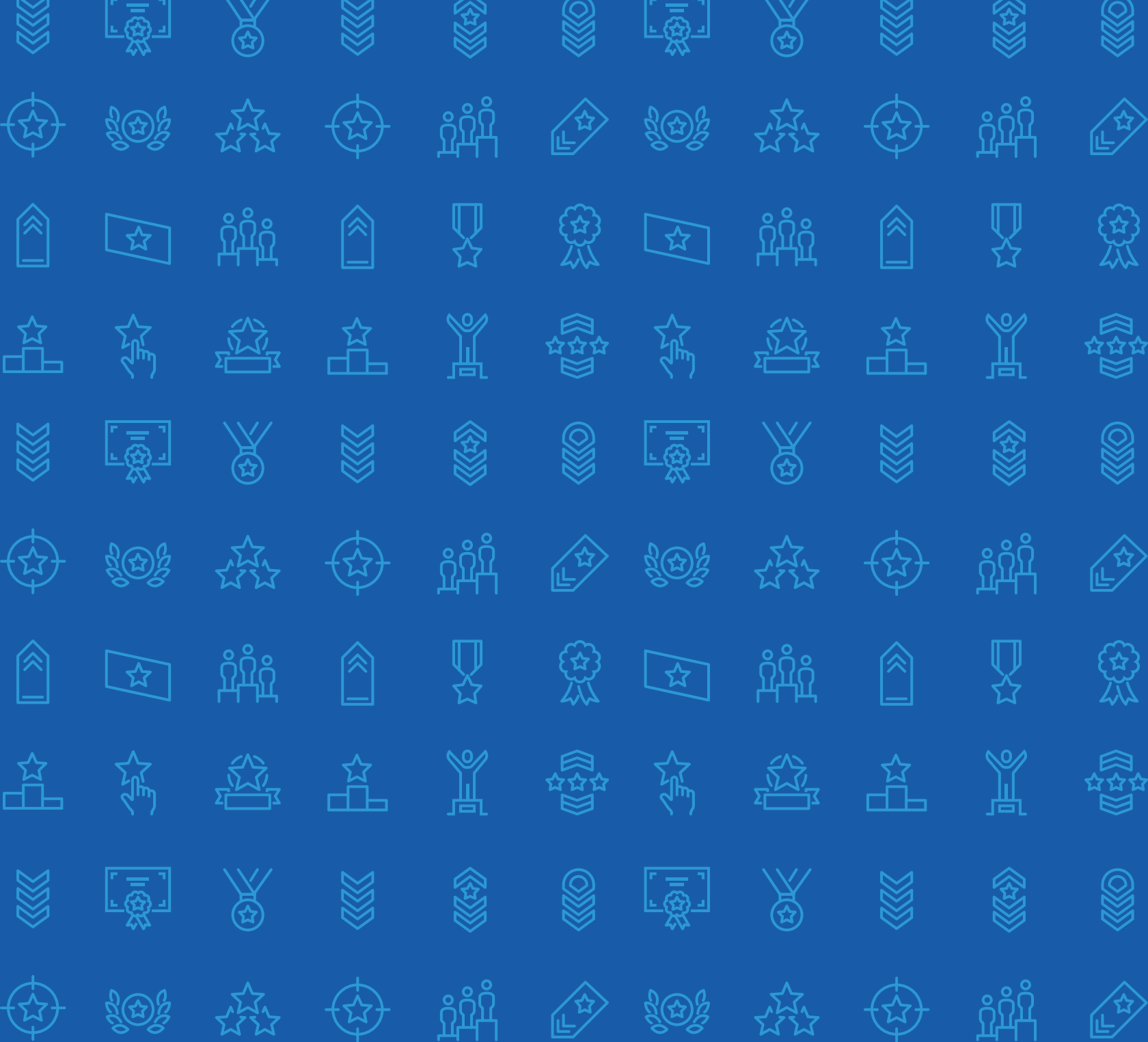
Additional funding opportunities may be available locally – through military installation family community centers, spouse groups, or the Chamber of Commerce.



Your experience as a military spouse professional can help shape the future for those who follow in your footsteps. Not only can you be your own best advocate today, your story will inspire others and change the game for spouses like you.

Want to know more? Visit our [Military Spouse License + Certification hub](#) to see more valuable tips, resources, and toolkits, and connect with spouse employment experts who specialize in understanding the issues surrounding military spouse employment and occupational licensure.





CONTACT US

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703.931.6632 | [MilitaryFamily.org/Licensing-Certification](https://militaryfamily.org/licensing-certification)



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