

# Transferring Your Professional License: What's Involved?

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Moving across the country - or around the world - can be a great adventure. Here's some help for making sure your licenses and certifications travel with you during your next move.

Your service branch will help reimburse licensure costs that come up when you PCS. Plus, the Department of Defense's [Defense-State Liaison Office](#) and [Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program](#) worked to [streamline state licensing procedures](#) to make it easier for military spouses to find a job.

## About spouse licensure reimbursement policies

The 2018 National Defense Authorization Act allows each service branch to reimburse spouses up to \$500 for relicensure and certification costs resulting from relocations or PCS moves that cross U.S. state lines.

Click on your sponsoring service branch below for details on how to apply for your reimbursement.

- **Who's eligible?** Military spouses of soldiers of any rank who moved across state lines due to a PCS under accompanied orders, and who wish to pursue the same licensure or certification in their new location.
- **What can get reimbursed?** The Army defines 'qualified relicensing costs' as any fees or costs associated with getting the same or similar license in a new state that a military spouse held at their previous location. This includes exam and registration fees. You can receive up to \$500 in reimbursement per move.
- **What documents do you need?** You'll need:
  - Standard Form 1034, 'Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other Than Personal'
  - Copy of PCS orders
  - Copy of spouse's previous state license or certification that was valid at the previous station
  - Copy of new state license or certification
  - Proof of fee payment
  - Copy of marriage certificate

- **What is the reimbursement process?** You can apply for reimbursement after getting your new license or certification. Commanders will assign local officers to approve documents and eligibility status. Once approved, the reimbursement will transfer to a soldier's direct deposit account within 10 working days.
- **Where can I learn more about the Army's reimbursement policy?** Read the [Army's announcement about the new policy](#), along with [a more detailed process](#).
- **Who's eligible?** Military spouses of Marines of any rank who moved across state lines due to a PCS under accompanied orders, and who wish to pursue the same licensure or certification in their new location.
- **What can get reimbursed?** The Marine Corps defines 'qualified relicensing/recertification costs' as any required exam costs or registration fees set by the new state, so the spouse can continue working in their current profession. You can receive up to \$500 in reimbursement per move.
- **What documents do you need?** You'll need:
  - **Copy of PCS orders**
  - Copy of previous state license or certification that was valid at the previous station
  - Copy of new state license or certification
  - A receipt showing the fees paid in the new state
- **What is the reimbursement process?** You can apply for reimbursement after getting your new license or certification. Bring the documentation to your local on-base Personnel Administration Office or Center, who will start the process for you.
- **Where can I learn more about the Marine Corps' reimbursement policy?** Read the [Marine Corps' announcement about the new policy](#), along with [a more detailed process](#).
- **Who's eligible?** Military spouses of sailors of any rank who moved across state lines due to a PCS or PCA under accompanied orders on or after Dec. 12, 2017, and who wish to pursue the same licensure or certification in their new location.
- **What can get reimbursed?** The Navy defines 'qualified relicensing costs' as any fees or costs associated with getting the same or similar license in a new state that a military spouse held at their previous location. This includes exam and registration fees. You can receive up to \$500 in reimbursement per move.
- **What documents do you need?** You'll need:
  - **Spouse License Reimbursement Request** [Official Business](#) voucher
  - Copy of PCS/PCA orders
  - Copy of spouse's previous state license or certification that was valid at the previous station, or proof of employment in that profession if a license was not required in the previous state.
  - Copy of new state license or certification
  - Copy of receipt for relicensing and/or recertification fees

- **What is the reimbursement process?** Sailors can apply for reimbursement after their spouse receives their new license or certification. See [Steps for Filing a Claim](#) for more about the process.
- **Where can I learn more about the Navy's reimbursement policy?** Read the Navy's [announcement about the new policy](#), along with [eligibility information and application procedures](#).
- **Who's eligible?** Military spouses of airmen of any rank who moved across state lines - including Alaska and Hawaii - due to a PCS under accompanied orders, and who wish to pursue the same licensure or certification in their new location.
- **What can get reimbursed?** The Air Force defines 'qualified relicensing costs' as any required exam costs or registration fees set by the new state so the spouse can keep working in their current profession. You can receive up to \$500 in reimbursement per move.
- **What documents do you need?** You'll need:
  - **Copy of PCS/PCA orders** and current state occupational license or certification
  - Paid receipt showing the new state's relicensure fees
- **What is the reimbursement process?** Spouses should apply for reimbursement after you have your new state's license or certification. Bring the documentation to your local servicing finance office. There, staff can walk you through the other required forms.
- **Where can I learn more about the Air Force's reimbursement policy?** Read the [Air Force's announcement about the new policy](#), along with a ['frequently asked questions' flyer](#).
- **Who's eligible?** Military spouses of Coast Guard members of any rank who moved across state lines due to a PCS under accompanied orders on or after Dec. 12, 2017, and who wish to pursue the same licensure or certification in their new location.
- **What can get reimbursed?** The Coast Guard defines 'qualified relicensing costs' as any fees or costs associated with getting the same or similar license in a new state that a military spouse held at their previous location. This includes exam and registration fees. You can receive up to \$500 in reimbursement per move.
- **What documents do you need?** You'll need:
  - **Claim for Members for Expenditures on Official Business voucher**
  - Copy of current PCS orders
  - Copy of new state license and/or certifications
  - Copy of receipt for relicensing and/or recertification fees
- **What is the reimbursement process?** Coast Guard members can apply for reimbursement after their spouse receives their new license or certification. See [License and Certification Reimbursement for Spouses](#) for more about the process.
- **Where can I learn more about the Coast Guard's reimbursement policy?** Read [these frequently asked questions](#) about the new policy.

## About state-sponsored reciprocal agreements

This [map](#) shows you which individual states support transfer of licenses, what options the state has in place for licensing and permits, and links to government boards and agencies.

Depending on your work, state-sponsored reciprocal agreements can help reduce or eliminate the relicensing process in your new state. If the process turns out to be lengthy or costly, you may be eligible for unemployment compensation. Your [state's employment office](#) can offer more details.

## Transferring your teaching license

Licensing requirements for teachers vary by state, but some states will issue a provisional license if you have a license from another state.

- The [National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification](#) administers an agreement that helps teachers transfer their credentials within member states. Visit its [Interstate Agreement](#) page for details.
- [Department of Defense schools](#) overseas accept teaching licenses from any state or territory as long as the teaching categories are marked on the license.

## Health care professions

- **Nursing:** All states require licensing for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. Many participate in the [Nurse Licensure Compact](#), which allows nurses to practice with a multistate license. See the [National Council of State Boards of Nursing](#).
- **Nurse practitioner:** Although licensing requirements vary by state, there is a national certification offered by the [American Academy of Nurse Practitioners](#).
- **Physical therapist:** All states require licensing. Some expedite licensing for military spouses moving into their state. Visit the [American Physical Therapy Association](#).
- **Medical transcriptionist:** Most states don't require licensing or certification. Visit the [Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity](#) for information about voluntary credentials.
- **Physician assistant:** All states require a license, but rules vary. See the [National Commission on Certification of Physician's Assistants](#).
- **Emergency medical technician and paramedic:** All states require some type of license or certification. Check with the [National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians](#) for national certifications.

## Other occupations

- **Attorney:** The [Military Spouse JD Network](#) advocates for licensing accommodations for military spouses in each state.
- **Child care worker:** Many employers prefer to hire workers who have earned a nationally recognized designation. See the [National Child Care Association](#).
- **Cosmetologist:** (includes hair stylists, barbers, nail technicians and skin care specialists): While states have varying licensing requirements, the [National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology](#) offers a national testing program.

- **Massage therapist:** Many states require some type of credential. Visit the [American Massage Therapy Association](#) and the [Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards](#).
- **Paralegal:** Credentials are not required in most states, although a nationally recognized certification through the [National Association of Legal Assistants](#) may offer an advantage when looking for a new job.
- **Real estate agent:** Licenses are required in every state. The [National Association of Realtors](#) has a listing of state and local real estate boards, with details on state licensing requirements and reciprocity agreements.
- **Social worker:** All states require some type of license or registration, but requirements vary. Nationally recognized agencies offer credentials that may transfer between states. See the [Association of Social Work Boards](#) for more.

## Licensing overseas

In some occupations, your state-issued license - no matter where it's from - is valid for government and contracting jobs. To learn more about transferring certifications overseas, [check with that installation's hiring authority](#).

## More tips for transferring certifications

The Department of Defense is committed to making it easier for military spouses to find and follow a meaningful career.

- Find information about the progress of licensing issues that affect military spouses in your state on the Defense-State Liaison Office's website, [Military State Policy Source](#). DSLO partners with state policymakers and leaders to help reduce or eliminate licensing barriers for military spouses as they move with the military.
- Connect with other military spouses on the [Blue Star Networks](#) to share professional information and get the scoop on state licensing requirements.
- Identify occupations with good job portability. Search for open positions with hundreds of employers committed to hiring military spouses through the [Military Spouse Employment Partnership Job Search on MySECO](#).