



# Texas Interstate Compact Coalition

## What is an Interstate Compact?

Interstate Compacts are legislatively authorized agreements among states that maintain their sovereignty without the federal government's involvement. Similar to a contract, a compact establishes a formal, legal relationship among states to address common problems.

## How many interstate compacts does Texas participate in?

Texas is currently a member of 38 interstate compacts, five of which are related to professional licensing.

- Emergency Medical Services Compact (EMS Compact)
- Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC)
- Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC)
- Physical Therapy (PT Compact)
- Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT)

## Potential New Interstate Compacts for 89th Legislative Session

Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Compact

Cosmetology Compact

Counseling Compact

Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

Dietitian Licensure Compact

Occupational Therapy Compact

PA Licensure Compact

Respiratory Care Interstate Compact

Social Work Licensure Compact

## Occupational Licensing Compacts

Occupational Licensing Compacts preserve the authority of each member state to control and enforce its scope of practice. When a licensee is practicing under the compact in Texas, they must abide by all Texas laws, rules and regulations that govern their practice. They are also under the jurisdiction of the relevant Texas licensing authority.

Additionally, all occupational licensing compacts will set up a commission made up of delegates from each member state. The commission will promulgate rules to effectively and efficiently implement and administer the purposes and provisions of the compact. The compact commission cannot amend a member state's scope of practice; each compact specifically states that any rule beyond its scope is invalid.

In addition, occupational licensing compacts:

- Respond to the state's workforce needs.
- Maintain high state standards and simultaneously reduce administrative burdens.
- Provide licensees with opportunities for multistate practice.
- Increase mobility for licensees as well as clients who are relocating.



Since 2016, states have enacted over **366 pieces** of compact legislation.

42 states and territories have enacted at least **three pieces** of compact legislation.

50 states and territories have enacted at least one compact.

## Benefits for Licensees

- Facilitates mobility for licensees.
- Leverages advances in technology such as tele-practice.
- Helps address the state's workforce and economic needs.
- Eases the burden of applying for and maintaining multiple licenses.
- Improves continuity of care.
- Expedites licensing process to serve Texans sooner.

## Benefits for Texans

- Increases access to care and continuity of services benefits patients, clients and families; allows clients to remain with a provider if the client moves.
- Creates an incentive for licensees to serve Texans.
- Ensures public protection by empowering state licensing boards to cooperate on identifying bad actors.

## Benefits for Texas Licensing Boards

- Reduces administrative burden.
- State-by-state agreement on uniform licensure requirements.
- Enhances public safety through a shared interstate data system of licensure and disciplinary information, allowing for rapid verification of licensure status and cooperation among states.
- Expands cooperation among state licensure boards on investigations and disputes.
- Grants licensing boards jurisdiction over licensees practicing in their state.

## Benefits for the State

- A state-based solution which allows for flexibility and autonomy in comparison to "one size fits all" federal policy.
- Preserves state sovereignty.
- Promotes workforce development and strengthens labor markets.
- Expands consumer access to highly qualified practitioners.
- Fiscally responsible approach to mitigating workforce shortage issues. Licensees coming to Texas may pay a licensing fee to their respective board.

## Military Families

Military families are highly mobile and are reassigned to a new duty station every 2-3 years on average. This level of mobility creates barriers to employment and career development for military spouses in licensed professions. The Department of Defense (DoD) is committed to supporting military spouses as an essential component of supporting military families. Retention of the force is essential for military readiness.

The Department of Defense endorses interstate compacts as the gold standard for military spouse licensure portability. Compacts allow military spouses to practice their profession without the need to obtain or apply for a new license each time they move to a new state. Texas has partially alleviated this concern through SB 1200 (2019). However, this law only allows military spouses to engage in the occupation for up to three years.

Congress recently passed a new law requiring states to recognize a military spouse's license issued by another state. However, the application process remains complicated and does not provide significant efficiencies from the current licensure process. The DoD continues to support interstate compacts as the best long-term solution for their military spouse population.