

Chapter 18.340 RCW
MILITARY SPOUSES—PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

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RCW 18.340.005 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Authority" means any agency, board, commission, or other authority for issuance of a license, certificate, registration, or permit under this title. "Authority" does not include the department of labor and industries, or the department of financial institutions with respect to escrow agent licensure under chapter 18.44 RCW.

(2) "License" means a license, certificate, registration, or permit to perform professional services. [2023 c 165 § 3.]

Short title—Finding—Intent—2023 c 165: See notes following RCW 18.340.020.

RCW 18.340.010 Intent. The lives of military families are dominated by frequent deployments, relocations, and extended periods of single parenthood. Military spouses are some of the most mobile populations in our country, making the maintenance of professional licenses a significant obstacle. According to the 2010 defense management data center, there are thirty-three thousand three hundred eighty active duty and ten thousand eight hundred thirty-seven reserve military spouses residing in Washington. Military families depend on two incomes and want to achieve their goals and aspirations. It is the intent of the legislature to recognize the sacrifices made by military families in service to our country and our state and to help alleviate the hardships military families face due to their highly transient life. [2011 2nd sp.s. c 5 § 1.]

Implementation—2011 2nd sp.s. c 5: "The regulating authorities for the department of licensing, the department of health, the department of labor and industries, and the superintendent of public instruction shall appear before the joint committee on veteran and military affairs in December 2012 to inform the committee as to their efforts to implement the requirements of this chapter." [2011 2nd sp.s. c 5 § 3.]

RCW 18.340.020 Expedition of professional license, certification, registration, or permit. (Effective until October 1, 2023.) (1) For the purposes of this section, "authority" means any board, commission, or other authority for issuance of a license, certificate, registration, or permit under this title.

(2) To the extent resources are available:

(a) Each authority shall establish procedures to expedite the issuance of a license, certificate, registration, or permit to perform professional services regulated by each such authority to a person:

(i) Who is certified or licensed, certified, or registered, or has a permit in another state to perform professional services in that state;

(ii) Whose spouse is the subject of a military transfer to Washington; and

(iii) Who left employment in the other state to accompany the person's spouse to Washington.

(b) The procedure must include a process for issuing the person a license, certificate, registration, or permit, if, in the opinion of the authority, the requirements for licensure, certification, registration, or obtaining a permit of such other state are substantially equivalent to that required in Washington.

(c) Each authority in this title shall develop a method and adopt rules to authorize a person who meets the criteria in (a)(i) through (iii) of this subsection to perform services regulated by the authority in Washington by issuing the person a temporary license, certificate, registration, or permit for a limited period of time to allow the person to perform services regulated by the authority while completing any specific additional requirements in Washington that are not related to training or practice standards of the profession that were not required in the other state in which the person is licensed, certified, or registered, or has a permit. Nothing in this section requires the authority to issue a temporary license, certificate, registration, or permit if the standards of the other state are substantially unequal to Washington standards.

(d) An applicant must state in the application that he or she:

(i) Has requested verification from the other state or states that the person is currently licensed, certified, registered, or has a permit; and

(ii) Is not subject to any pending investigation, charges, or disciplinary action by the regulatory body of the other state or states.

(e) If the authority finds reasonable cause to believe that an applicant falsely affirmed or stated either of the requirements under (d)(i) or (ii) of this subsection, the authority may summarily suspend the license, certificate, registration, or permit pending an investigation or further action to discipline or revoke the license, certificate, registration, or permit. [2011 2nd sp.s. c 5 § 2.]

Implementation—2011 2nd sp.s. c 5: See note following RCW 18.340.010.

RCW 18.340.020 Expedition of professional license. (Effective October 1, 2023.) (1)(a) Each authority shall establish procedures to expedite the issuance of a license regulated by each such authority to a person:

(i) Who is licensed, certified, or registered, or has a permit in another state to perform professional services in that state; and

(ii) Whose spouse is the subject of a military transfer to Washington.

(b) The procedure must include a process for issuing the person a license within 30 days of receiving a completed application. A completed application means that the authority has received all supporting materials, related application fees, fingerprints, and required documentation associated with a criminal background check.

(2) Each authority in this title shall develop a method and adopt rules to authorize a person who meets the criteria in this section to perform services regulated by the authority in Washington by issuing the person a temporary license within 30 days of receiving a completed application. A completed application means that the authority has received a copy of the certificate issued by the other state for a certificated education professional, related application fees, fingerprints, and required documentation associated with a criminal background check. The license may be issued for a limited period of time of no less than 180 days to allow the person to perform services regulated by the authority while completing any specific additional requirements in Washington that are not related to training or practice standards of the profession that were not required in the other state in which the person is licensed, certified, or registered, or has a permit.

(3) Nothing in this section requires the authority to issue a license if the standards of the other state are substantially unequal to Washington standards.

(4) An applicant must state in the application that the applicant:

(a) Has requested verification from the other state or states that the person is currently licensed, certified, registered, or has a permit; and

(b) Is not subject to any pending investigation, charges, or disciplinary action by the regulatory body of the other state or states.

(5) If the authority finds reasonable cause to believe that an applicant falsely affirmed or stated either of the requirements under subsection (4)(a) or (b) of this section, the authority may summarily suspend the license pending an investigation or further action to discipline or revoke the license. [2023 c 165 § 4; 2011 2nd sp.s. c 5 § 2.]

Effective date—2023 c 165 § 4: "Section 4 of this act takes effect October 1, 2023." [2023 c 165 § 11.]

Short title—2023 c 165: "This act may be known and cited as the military spouse employment act." [2023 c 165 § 1.]

Finding—Intent—2023 c 165: "The legislature finds that the lives of military spouses are dominated by frequent deployments and relocations, and one-third of military families move each year. Many military families depend on two incomes, and military spouses tend to be better educated than the civilian population, with approximately 34 to 50 percent working in fields that require a professional license. The length of time to credential after a move is a significant employment barrier, with one study finding 20 percent of military spouses waited at least 10 months for a license after moving to a new state. This wait contributes to higher rates of unemployment or underemployment for military spouses when compared to their civilian counterparts. Given the fiscal and economic constraints of military

families and the readiness considerations of the department of defense, the legislature intends to help alleviate the career turmoil military spouses face while serving in our state." [2023 c 165 § 2.]

Implementation—2011 2nd sp.s. c 5: See note following RCW 18.340.010.

RCW 18.340.030 Authority duties and recommendations—Person to assist—Member training. (1) Each authority must identify a contact or coordinator within the authority to assist military spouse applicants and licensees.

(2) Each authority must provide training to each board or commission member on the culture of military spouses, the military spouse experience, and issues related to military spouse career paths. Board or commission members appointed on or before October 1, 2023, must complete the training by January 1, 2024. Board or commission members appointed after October 1, 2023, must complete the training within 90 days after appointment. The department of veterans affairs shall create an internet-based training that may be used by each authority to satisfy this requirement.

(3) Each authority is encouraged to:

(a) Appoint a military spouse to serve on its licensing board or commission;

(b) Conduct a review of the authority's licensing application process for military spouses and identify barriers to military spouse employment; and

(c) Review licensing fees and related expenses and identify possible ways to reduce costs for military spouses. [2023 c 165 § 5.]

Short title—Finding—Intent—2023 c 165: See notes following RCW 18.340.020.

RCW 18.340.040 Military spouse assistance web pages. (1) The employment security department, the department of health, the department of licensing, and the department of veterans affairs shall each maintain a military spouse assistance web page containing, at a minimum:

(a) Each authority's rules and procedures, including any required fees, related to the licensing of military spouses;

(b) Contact information for each authority's military spouse contact or coordinator; and

(c) Links to the military spouse assistance web pages of other agencies.

(2) A direct link to the agency's military spouse assistance web page must be displayed on the agency's home page. [2023 c 165 § 6.]

Short title—Finding—Intent—2023 c 165: See notes following RCW 18.340.020.