

RCW 18.321.005 Purpose. The purpose of this compact is to facilitate interstate practice of regulated social workers by improving public access to competent social work services. The compact preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure.

This compact is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) Increase public access to social work services;
- (2) Reduce overly burdensome and duplicative requirements associated with holding multiple licenses;
- (3) Enhance the member states' ability to protect the public's health and safety;
- (4) Encourage the cooperation of member states in regulating multistate practice;
- (5) Promote mobility and address workforce shortages by eliminating the necessity for licenses in multiple states by providing for the mutual recognition of other member state licenses;
- (6) Support military families;
- (7) Facilitate the exchange of licensure and disciplinary information among member states;
- (8) Authorize all member states to hold a regulated social worker accountable for abiding by a member state's laws, regulations, and applicable professional standards in the member state in which the client is located at the time care is rendered; and
- (9) Allow for the use of telehealth to facilitate increased access to regulated social work services. [2024 c 176 s 2.]

Intent—2024 c 176: "(1) It is the intent of the legislature to allow clinical social workers in compact member states the opportunity to provide behavioral health services in the state of Washington, while broadening and simplifying the opportunities for Washington-licensed clinical social workers to practice in other states belonging to the compact. It is further the intent of the legislature to maintain standards already adopted in Washington by making it explicitly clear that this legislation [act] in no way conflicts with either chapter 192, Laws of 2023 or chapter 193, Laws of 2023.

(2) The legislature acknowledges that the association of social work boards licensing test has been shown to have severe disparities in outcomes based on the race, age, and language of test takers. Because of these disparities, the state of Washington aims to collaborate with other states and interested parties to find alternatives to this test." [2024 c 176 s 1.]