Counseling Licensure Portability

ICES Counselor Educator and Supervisor Summit
Friday, April 5th 2019

Definitions

“Licensure portability refers to the ability of a professional counselor licensed at the independent practice level to transfer their license to another state or U.S. jurisdiction when the counselor changes residence to that state or jurisdiction” (ACA, 2016). [https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/aca-licensure-portability-model-faqs]

National Counselor Licensure Endorsement Process (NCLEP)

Completed in April 2017, NCLEP is the result of a task force between the American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB), the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), and the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) with one goal: a safe, clear, reasonable portability process for all current and future counselors. The task force agreed upon five (5) key tenets which informed each decision by the taskforce.

Specifically, a uniform licensure endorsement process must:

1. Significantly increase public access to qualified care;
2. Establish minimum standards for safe practice;
3. Reduce administrative burdens for both state regulatory boards and licensees;
4. Create consistency in licensure standards across state lines; and
5. Ensure protection of the public and the continued development of the profession.

Publicly endorsed by CACREP in July 2017

1. The licensee has engaged in ethical practice, with no disciplinary sanctions, for at least 5 years from the date of application for licensure endorsement.
2. The licensee has possessed the highest level of counselor licensure for independent practice for at least 3 years from the date of application for licensure endorsement.
3. The licensee has completed a jurisprudence or equivalent exam if required by the state regulatory body.
4. The licensee complies with ONE of the following:
   a. Meets all academic, exam, and post-graduate supervised experience standards as adopted by the state counseling licensure board.
   b. Holds the National Certified Counselor (NCC) credential, in good standing, as issued by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC).
   c. Holds a graduate-level degree from a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

   [http://www.amhca.org/advocacy/portability/portability2017

ACA Portability Plan

Approved by the ACA Governing Council in June 2016: [https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements/licensure-portability-model-fact-sheet]

“A counselor who is licensed at the independent practice level in their home state and who has no disciplinary record shall be eligible for licensure at the independent practice level in any state or U.S. jurisdiction in which they are seeking residence. The state to which the licensed counselor is moving may require a jurisprudence examination based on the rules and procedures of that state.”

“Governing Council discussed the proposal from the Council of State Governments to pursue a professional interstate licensure compact to help make counselors’ licensures more portable across multiple states. The Governing Council reached a consensus to move forward with scoping out a pathway toward accepting the proposal to be formally considered at a future meeting” (ACA Governing Council Meeting Minutes 7/2018).
The National Center for Interstate Compacts [https://www.csg.org/ncic/](https://www.csg.org/ncic/)

1. Endorses the development of a professional occupational interstate compact for professional counselors;
2. Empowers the ACA President and the ACA CEO to negotiate and sign a contract with the National Center for Interstate Compacts to include three phases:
   a. Project research, the development and convening of the advisory group, and the drafting of compact language;
   b. The development and implementation of legislative strategy;
   c. The development of the commission bylaws, structure, membership, budget and promotion strategies.
3. Allocates up to $600,000 for the contract with the National Center for Interstate Compacts. These funds will be drawn from the long-term operating fund balance rather than from the operating budget. (ACA Governing Council Meeting Minutes 10/2018).

According to President Simone Lambert, with an Interstate Compact, “The hope is that within all the states that sign on to the compact, professional counselors will have the ability to move seamlessly, conduct telecounseling and practice across border states” [https://ct.counseling.org/2018/11/from-the-president-making-progress-toward-portability/](https://ct.counseling.org/2018/11/from-the-president-making-progress-toward-portability/)