



Summary of Key Provisions

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this Compact is to facilitate interstate practice of Regulated Social Workers and improve 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:

- Increase public access to Social Work Services;
- Reduce overly burdensome and duplicative requirements associated with holding multiple licenses.
- Enhance the Member States' ability to protect the public's health and safety;
- Encourage the cooperation of Member States in regulating multistate practice;
- 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;
- Support military families;
- Facilitate the exchange of licensure and disciplinary information among Member States;
- Authorize all Member States to hold a Regulated Social Worker accountable for abiding by the 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
- Allow for the use of telehealth to facilitate increased access to regulated Social Work Services.

Section 2: Definitions

This section establishes the definitions of key terms and concepts as used throughout the compact to provide uniform understanding on the part of regulatory jurisdictions and practitioners. Defined terms are capitalized throughout the document.

Key Definitions:

“Home State” means the Member State that is the Licensee's primary Domicile.

This project was funded by the Department of Defense.



“Multistate License” means a license to practice as a Regulated Social Worker issued by a Home State Licensing Authority that authorizes the Regulated Social Worker to practice in all Member States under a Multistate Authorization to Practice.

“Multistate Authorization to Practice” means a legally authorized privilege to practice, which is equivalent to a license, associated with a Multistate License permitting the practice of Social Work in a Remote State.

“Qualifying National Exam” means a national licensing examination approved by the Commission.

“Regulated Social Worker” means any clinical, master’s or bachelor’s Social Worker licensed by a Member State regardless of the title used by that Member State.

Section 3: State Participation in the Compact

This section establishes the foundational requirements for states to be eligible to join the compact and what is required of compact member states to remain compliant.

To enact the compact, a state must:

- License and regulate the practice of Social Work at either the clinical, master’s, or bachelor’s category.
- Require applicants for licensure to graduate from a program that is accredited, or in candidacy by an institution that subsequently becomes accredited and that corresponds to the licensure sought.
- Require applicants for clinical licensure to complete a period of supervised practice.

To maintain membership in the compact, a state must:

- Require applicants for a Multistate License pass a Qualifying National Exam corresponding to the category of Multistate License sought.
- Implement procedures for considering the criminal history records of applicants for a Multistate License.

Section 4: Social Worker Participation in the Compact

This section describes the requirements for a social worker to participate in the compact. Member states are obligated to accept multistate licenses from other compact member states as authorized to practice in each member state.

To be eligible for a multistate license, all social workers in a member state must:



- Hold, or be eligible for, an active, unencumbered license to practice social work in the compact member state in which they are domiciled.
- Agree to abide by the laws, regulations and rules of the state in which the client is located at the time service is provided.
- Submit to a review of criminal history, including a background check (disqualifying events are subject to the discretion of the member state)
- Pay all required fees related to the application and process, and any other fees which the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission may require by rule.

To be eligible for a clinical-category multistate license a social worker must:

1. Fulfill a competency requirement, which shall be satisfied by either:
 - a. Passing a clinical-category Qualifying National Exam; or
 - b. Hold and continuously maintain a clinical-category social work license in their Home State prior to a Qualifying National Exam being required by the Home State as further governed by the Rules of the Commission; or
 - c. Prove clinical competency through a substantially equivalent standard which the Commission may determine by Rule.
2. Attain at least a master's degree in social work from a program that is accredited, or in candidacy by an institution that subsequently becomes accredited.
3. Fulfill a supervised practice requirement, which shall be satisfied by demonstrating completion of either:
 - a. Three thousand (3,000) or more hours of postgraduate supervised clinical practice; or
 - b. Two years or more of full-time postgraduate supervised clinical practice; or
 - c. Be found to have proven clinical competency through a substantially equivalent standard which the Commission may determine by Rule.

To be eligible for a master's-category multistate license a social worker must:

1. Fulfill a competency requirement, which shall be satisfied by either:
 - a. Passing a master's-category Qualifying National Exam; or
 - b. Hold and continuously maintain a master's-category social work license in their Home State prior to a Qualifying National Exam being required by the Home State as further governed by the Rules of the Commission; or
 - c. Prove master's-category competency through a substantially equivalent standard which the Commission may determine by Rule.
2. Attain at least a master's degree in social work from a program that is accredited, or in candidacy by an institution that subsequently becomes accredited.

To be eligible for a bachelor's-category multistate license a social worker must:

1. Fulfill a competency requirement, which shall be satisfied by either:
 - a. Passing a bachelor's-category Qualifying National Exam; or



- b. Hold and continuously maintain a bachelor's-category social work license in their Home State prior to a Qualifying National Exam being required by the Home State as further governed by the Rules of the Commission; or
 - c. Prove bachelor's-category competency through a substantially equivalent standard which the Commission may determine by Rule.
- 2. Attain at least a bachelor's degree in social work from a program that is accredited, or in candidacy by an institution that subsequently becomes accredited.

To maintain a multistate license a social worker must meet the renewal requirements of the Home State.

Section 5: Issuance of a Multistate License

This section describes the multistate license issuance process and directs compact member states to issue a bachelors, masters or clinical-category multistate license according to the qualifications of a Regulated Social Worker.

Section 6: Authority of the Social Work Compact Commission and Member State Licensing Authorities

This section delineates between the commission's rulemaking ability vs. what the state retains control over.

Section 7: Reissuance of a Multistate License by a New Home State

This section outlines the process whereby multistate licensees who move to another compact member state apply for expedited reissuance of their multistate license to the new home state without the need for repeated primary source verification.

The compact provides for the new home state to subject the applicant to a background check and/or jurisprudence exam if required for licensure.

Section 8: Active Military Members and their Spouses

This section allows an active military member or their spouse to designate a home state where the individual has a current license in good standing. This state then serves as the individual's home state for as long as the service member is on active duty.

Section 9: Adverse Actions



This section clarifies that only a licensee's home state may take adverse action against a multistate license.

However, a remote state may take adverse action against the multistate authorization to practice in that state and may issue enforceable subpoenas for witnesses and evidence from other member states.

Home states can take reported adverse action from any member state into account when considering discipline on a multistate license in accordance with the home state's own laws.

Member states must share the presence of significant investigative information to other member states via the compact's data system.

Member states must report any adverse action to the compact data system, which then promptly alerts the home state of this adverse action. Any member state may take adverse action based on the factual findings of a remote state. Member states retain the right to require a licensee to participate in an alternative program for health-related concerns in lieu of adverse action.

Section 10: Establishment of the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission

This section outlines the composition and powers of the compact commission and executive committee.

- Each member state is entitled to one delegate.
 - The delegate must be a Regulated Social Worker who is current member or public member of the member state's licensing authority at the time of appointment; or
 - The administrator, executive director or equivalent of the member state's licensing authority or their designee.
- Each delegate has one vote on commission rules and bylaws.
- The commission may establish a term of office, code of ethics, bylaws, rules, a budget and financial records to fulfill the purpose of the compact.
- The commission must meet at least once per calendar year
- The commission shall elect an executive committee composed of up to nine (9) voting delegates.
- The executive committee shall include up to four (4) ex-officio, nonvoting members from four (4) national social work organizations.
- All commission and executive committee meetings shall be open to the public unless confidential or privileged information must be discussed.



Section 11: Data System

This section requires the sharing of licensee information by all member states.

Member states shall submit a uniform dataset to the data system on all social workers to whom the compact applies, as required by the rules of the commission. This database will allow for the expedited sharing of licensee, investigative and disciplinary information.

Investigative information pertaining to a licensee in any member state will only be available to other member states.

A member state may designate information submitted to the data system that may not be shared with the public without the express permission of that member state.

Section 12: Rulemaking

The Social Work Licensure Compact Commission may promulgate rules to effectively administer the compact.

Rules carry the force of law in all member states.

A simple majority of member state legislatures may veto a rule of the compact commission.

Changes to rules require a 30-day notice of proposed rulemaking, with an opportunity for a public hearing.

If the commission takes an action that is beyond the scope of the compact, the action is invalid and has no force and effect.

Section 13: Oversight, Dispute Resolution and Enforcement

Ensures compliance with the compact by member states and details the procedures to be followed in the event a member state fails to comply with the compact, including:

- A period of technical assistance in remedying the situation.
- Dispute resolution, including mediation and binding processes.
- Termination from the compact if no other means of compliance is successful.
- The compact commission shall attempt to resolve any compact-related disputes that may arise between states.

Section 14: Effective Date, Withdrawal and Amendment



The compact takes effect on the date of enactment by the seventh (7th) state.

States that join after the initial convening of the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission are subject to the rules of the commission as they exist on the date when the compact becomes law in that state.

Member states may enact a law to repeal their membership in the compact. A state's withdrawal takes effect 180 days after enactment of such law.

Section 15: Construction and Severability

The compact is to be liberally construed to effectuate its purposes.

The compact's provisions are severable, meaning that:

- If a provision is declared to conflict with the United States Constitution, all other provisions remain valid for all member states.
- If a provision is held contrary to a member state's constitution, the compact retains its full force in all other states, and all other provisions remain valid in the affected state.

Section 16: Consistent Effect and Conflict with Other State Laws

Member states retain sovereignty over all laws, and nothing shall inhibit or prohibit enforcement of laws that are not in conflict with the compact.

Any laws, statutes, regulations or other legal requirements in a member state that conflict with the compact are superseded to the extent of the conflict.