



National Trends on State Regulation of YTTs as Occupational Schools

Specific Exemption of YTTs from Occupational School Regulations

- The number of states that have specifically removed yoga teacher training programs (YTTs) from regulations governing occupational or vocational schools is growing.
- In the past five years, laws have been enacted in Arkansas, Colorado, New York, Texas, and Virginia to remove YTTs from the jurisdiction of state agencies tasked with regulating or licensing occupational or vocational schools. In addition, regulators in Georgia have determined to halt efforts to regulate YTTs, and since 1992, South Carolina's regulators have officially categorized yoga schools as avocational programs.
- Each law enacted to exempt YTTs from occupational school regulations has passed state legislatures with widespread, bipartisan support. Indeed, laws to protect YTTs in Arkansas and Texas were passed unanimously, and in Colorado, only a single nay vote was cast in each legislative chamber.

Nationwide Attempts to Regulate YTTs as Occupational Schools

- The majority of states have not attempted to regulate YTTs as occupational schools. In fact, 9 states have not enacted occupational school regulatory regimes at all.
- In 5 states (AR, CO, NY, TX, VA), YTTs are specifically exempted by statute from occupational school regulations.
 - *Arkansas.* Under Arkansas' occupational school law, amended earlier this year, "a program of instruction in yoga or in yoga teacher training" is excluded from the definition of "schools" subject to regulation. Further, the law specifies that it "does not apply to a school or training program that offers only avocational or recreational instruction or teacher instruction for the following subjects . . . yoga." See Ark. Code § 6-51-602.
 - *Colorado.* Under the Colorado occupational school law, also amended earlier this year, "yoga teacher training courses, programs, and schools" are specifically "exempt from the provisions of the [law]." See Colo. Rev. Stat. § 12-59-104.
 - *New York.* New York's occupational school law includes a specific exemption from state licensing requirements for "schools which provide instruction in the following subjects only: . . . yoga . . . , including the training of students to teach such subjects". See NY Educ Law §5001.
 - *Texas.* Under Texas occupational school law, "[a] program of instruction in yoga or that trains persons to teach yoga" is excluded from the definition of a "postsecondary program" otherwise subject to regulation. See TX Educ. Ann. § 132.001.

- *Virginia.* The scope of Virginia’s occupational school law is limited in that “instructional programs that are intended solely for recreation, enjoyment, personal interest, or as a hobby, *or courses or programs of instruction that prepare individuals to teach such pursuits*” are excluded from the definition of “vocational” schools subject to regulation. *See* VA Code Ann. § 23-276.1 (emphasis added). This legislative language was the byproduct of advocacy by Virginia’s yoga community to ensure that YTTs would not be subject to vocational training regulation.
- Further, based on publicly available information, approximately half of the states are not currently regulating YTTs as occupational schools or otherwise not widely or systematically regulating YTTs as occupational schools.
- Executive, legislative, and public opposition is growing rapidly in the minority of states that have determined to aggressively pursue YTTs under occupational school regulatory regimes. Yoga Alliance is currently working with state legislators in Arizona, Illinois, Michigan, and Missouri to specifically exempt YTTs from occupational education regulations.
- Importantly, in every state where YTTs are not subject to occupational school regulatory requirements, all other state, federal, and local business, consumer protection, and premises safety regulations still apply to YTTs, just like any other business providing a service to consumers.