



Why Alaska Needs the Nurse Licensure Compact

Alaska's Nurses Want to Join!

- **92% of Alaska's nurses want Alaska to join the NLC**; only 5% oppose; 3% had no opinion.
 - 60% list Alaska as their **primary state of residence**: 89% support, 7.5% oppose, 3.5% no opinion.
 - 25% state Alaska is the **first** U.S. jurisdiction where they ever held a license: 86% support, 10% oppose, 4% no opinion.
 - 23% stated they were **members of a union** during employment: 85% support, 12% oppose, 3% no opinion.
 - *This data is based on the survey sent out by the Board of Nursing to all Alaska-licensed registered nurses (RNs) and practical nurses (LPNs) in October 2023: [2023 NLC Survey Report](#).*
- These results mirror the **same level of support** demonstrated by the same survey conducted in 2019.
- The Alaska **Board of Nursing has voted unanimously in support of joining the NLC** since 2019.

Alaska's Nursing Shortage is Getting Worse!

- Alaska had a **21% vacancy rate in RN positions** in its hospitals.
- The average time to fill a vacant hospital RN position is **118 days** and **157 days** for a long-term care facility RN position due processing times for licensing & credentialing by the facility.
- Alaska needs over **1,350 new nursing** recruits annually.
- Alaska is projected to **lead the nation in nursing vacancy** rates by 2030.
- Nurse vacancies result in **less access to care for Alaskans**, clinic/facility closures, longer wait times at hospitals and ERs, and potentially delivery of lower standards of care.
 - This can **force Alaskans** who need adequate medical care **to move out of state**, especially as Alaska's senior population grows.
- *This data was provided by the [2023 Alaska Healthcare Workforce Analysis Report](#).*

We're Currently Losing New Nurses & Discouraging Existing Nurses from Moving Here!

- All of Alaska's nursing schools combined graduate around **325 nursing graduates** per year.
 - **Multistate licenses are appealing** to new graduates.
 - Many **nursing graduates leave** Alaska to establish residency in an NLC state so they can obtain a multistate license and operate as a travel nurse under one license.
 - Instructing in a nursing school in Alaska requires an Alaska license – joining the **NLC gives our nursing schools better access to nursing educators**, which makes it easier to “grow our own.”
- **Nurses lose their multistate license if they establish residency** in a non-NLC state, so we're actively discouraging experienced nurses from establishing residency here and new nurses from remaining in, or returning to, the state.
- As of March 2025, **43 U.S. jurisdictions have joined the NLC** and six (6) have bills pending to join.
 - Only three (3) states and two (2) U.S. jurisdictions are not in the NLC or actively trying to join.
 - Two (2) of the states not currently pursuing the NLC have two of the three most populated cities in the U.S. and therefore are not experiencing the shortage of nurses we are – California and Illinois.

NLC is the Most Well-Vetted Professional Licensure Compact Out There!

- The NLC is the **longest-standing professional licensure compact** in the U.S., celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.
- **No U.S. jurisdiction has ever opted to exit from the NLC.**
- **Alaska has joined** the Interstate Physical Therapy Licensure Compact and Audiology and Speech-Language Interstate Compact and is considering legislation to join additional compacts.
 - While we agree with the Legislature's decision to join these Compacts, they have lower **public safety guardrails** in place than the NLC, including the lack of experience/education requirements to qualify for a Physical Therapist Compact Privilege to practice in Alaska.
 - The Audiology and Speech-Language Interstate Compact **isn't operational yet**, so it hasn't even been tested.
- The NLC language adopted into statute requires **all states to ensure multistate licensees** meet requirements for licensure that are equal to, and in some areas higher, than Alaska's requirements.
- The **federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)** requires states to issue licensure to military members or spouses based on reciprocity without any requirement for the license from another U.S. jurisdiction to have even substantially equivalent requirements to Alaska's, if they don't have a Compact in place for that license type. **Compacts provide more public safety assurances than this current federal law.**
 - While this only applies to military members and their spouses right now, the federal government has, in the past, **threatened nationwide preemption to require reciprocity**.
 - The creation of the Compact was a direct effort to establish agreements between states that would accomplish the same goal but **allow states to have safeguards and standards** in place.

Alaska Retains State Sovereignty Under the NLC!

- **Alaska will retain state sovereignty and all regulatory authority of nursing practice in the state** regardless of the type of license held.
- All nurses are required to comply with the **nursing laws in the state** where the patient is located, which are set by the Alaska Legislature and the Alaska Board of Nursing. Joining the NLC does not change that.
- The Alaska Board of Nursing and the Dunleavy Administration **would not support the NLC otherwise.**

States Retain All Authority Over the NLC!

- Each NLC state must **adopt the standard compact language into their state statutes** without any material deviations to join.
- This means the requirements of the **NLC cannot change** without the passage of a bill by each NLC state's legislature.
- **Only the NLC Commission can amend or create rules and bylaws**, and those must only be within the authority given within the standard compact language adopted into statute.
- The NLC Commission is made up of **one voting member from each party state**.
- **No national or federal organization**, including the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, have a seat on the NLC Commission or **have any authority over the NLC** or nursing laws and licensure.

There is Overwhelming Support for Alaska to Join the NLC!

- **Alaska's nurses, and many Alaska residents** impacted by the nursing shortage, want Alaska to join.
- Additionally, **over 75 organizations** have voiced their support for Alaska joining the NLC, including:
 - Alaska Hospital and Healthcare Association (AHHA)
 - Alaska Chamber of Commerce
 - Alaska Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Alliance
 - Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
 - Alaska State Medical Association
 - National Military Family Association
 - UAA School of Nursing