

HB 158: Professional Licensing; Temp Permits



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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

House Military and Veterans'
Affairs Committee
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Professional Licensing Overview

PROFESSIONAL LICENSING PROGRAM REGULATION

- 21 programs are regulated by licensing boards; these 21 programs offer 180 different license types
- 24 programs are regulated by the division; these 24 programs offer 82 different license types
- 261 license, permit, certification, and endorsement types exist within the 44 programs
- Over 400 pathways to initial licensure within the 45 programs
- Each program has its own statutes and regulations, and therefore has its own processes and requirements
- Each program may differ on its requirements for licensure compared to other states, due to statutes or regulations adopted by the Alaska Legislature and/or Alaska board or the department (as applicable)

STAFFING

- All 21 boarded programs have one dedicated staff member that works with the respective board
 - That one staff member is either the Executive Administrator (if established in statute for that program) or a Licensing Examiner 3-Advanced
- For most programs, the one staff member assigned to the board also handles all licensing, correspondence, and communications for that program
- Programs with significantly larger license numbers – such as nursing, construction contractors, pharmacy, and medical – are staffed by bare bone teams (i.e., as few staff members as needed to get the job done to keep program costs down per AS 08.01.065)
 - Staff that work on a boarded program, but do not staff the board directly, are Licensing Examiner 2s.
- Non-boarded programs are handled by a Licensing Examiner 1, or assigned to a Licensing Examiner 2 or 3 or a Program Coordinator that has capacity
- All programs are overseen by either an Executive Administrator or Program Coordinator\

INCREASES IN PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

- 27 percent increase in professional licenses since FY2019
- 50 percent increase in professional licenses over the last 10 years



Professional Licensing Overview

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21 Programs Regulated by Boards

- Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors (22 license types)
- Board of Barbers and Hairdressers (22 license types)
- Big Game Commercial Services Board (6 license types)
- Board of Chiropractic Examiners (4 license types)
- Board of Dental Examiners (15 license types + *additional certificates, endorsements, permits, etc.*)
- Board of Marine Pilots (3 license types)
- State Medical Board (11 license types + *additional agreements that must be processed & approved*)
- Board of Marital and Family Therapy (4 license types)
- Board of Massage Therapists (3 license types)
- Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives (4 license types)
- Board of Nursing (8 license types + *additional specialties, authorizations, etc. that must be approved*)
- Board of Examiners in Optometry (2 license types)
- Board of Professional Counselors (3 license types)
- Board of Pharmacy (18 license types)
- State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board (12 license types + *compact privileges for PTs and PTAs*)
- Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners (4 license types)
- Board of Public Accountancy (8 license types)
- Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers (10 license types)
- Real Estate Commission (10 license types + *additional approvals required when transferring offices or employing brokers*)
- Board of Social Work Examiners (6 license types)
- Board of Veterinary Examiners (5 license types)



Professional Licensing Overview (Cont.)

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24 Programs Regulated by Division

- Acupuncture (2 license types)
- Animal Euthanasia Permits (2 license types)
- Athletic Training (2 license types)
- Audiology (2 license types)
- Behavior Analysts (4 license types)
- Collection Agencies (6 license types)
- Concert Promoters (2 license types)
- Construction Contractors and Residential Endorsements (6 license types)
- Dietitians (2 license types)
- Dispensing Opticians (4 license types)
- Electrical Administrators (2 license types)
- Geologists (2 license types)
- Guardians and Conservators (10 license types)
- Hearing Aid Dealers (2 license types)
- Home Inspectors (6 license types)
- Mechanical Administrators (2 license types)
- Morticians (12 license types)
- Naturopaths (2 license types)
- Nursing Home Administrators (3 license types)
- Nutritionists (2 license types)
- Pawnbrokers (2 license types)
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (N/A)
- Speech-Language Pathology (4 license types)
- Underground Storage Tank Workers (2 license types)



Professional Licensing Overview (Cont.)

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What Does This Bill Do?

This bill does two things:

- Establishes Universal Temporary Licensure (UTL), a measure that establishes a pathway for limited reciprocity for qualified professionals coming to Alaska from other U.S. jurisdictions
- Aligns state statutes with the federal Servicemember Civil Relief Act (SCRA) licensure portability laws, which requires states to issue professional licenses for servicemembers and their spouses if they meet the requirements set in federal law



HB 158: UTL & SCRA Compliance

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What is Universal Temporary Licensure?

Universal Temporary Licensure (UTL) is a measure that establishes a pathway for limited reciprocity for qualified professionals who:

- Hold substantially equivalent licenses in good standing in other U.S. jurisdictions
- or -
- Meet the qualifications for Alaska licensure through military education, training, and service, who do not already hold a license in another jurisdiction



Universal Temporary Licensure

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How Does One Qualify for UTL?

Applicant must:

- Submit application and provide documents required to verify:
 - Licensure in good standing in all U.S. jurisdictions where they are or have even been licensed; or
 - Proof of meeting Alaska's qualifications with military education, training, and service per AS 08.01.064(a)
- Undergo a criminal history background check, if currently required for that profession in Alaska
- Pay all required fees

Applicant cannot:

- Be the subject of disciplinary action related to their profession or be the subject of ongoing review or disciplinary proceeding by the professional licensing entity in another jurisdiction; or
- Have committed an act in another jurisdiction within the past 10 years that would have constituted grounds for denial or revocation of a license in Alaska at the time the act was committed



Universal Temporary Licensure (Cont.)

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How Does UTL Work?

- Temporary licenses are **valid for up to 180 days**
- Applicants can apply for one 180-day extension (*approved at the department's discretion*)
- Temporary license holders are authorized to temporarily practice the profession for which the license was granted **in compliance with Alaska's laws**
- The department has the authority to revoke a temporary license if the license was secured under deceit, fraud, or intentional misrepresentation
- Applicant must still meet Alaska's standard requirements to convert the temporary license to a permanent license
- Temporary license provisions **do not apply** to:
 - AS 08.54: Big Game Guides and Related Occupations; or
 - AS 08.62: Marine Pilots



Universal Temporary Licensure (Cont.)

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Why is UTL Needed?

- Boards were given the authority to create temporary licenses under AS 08.01.062, but many still have not
- Processing times are long for many programs due to increased workloads
 - Increase of 50% in the number of professional licenses over the past ten years
- Items required for permanent licensure from third party primary sources are often what delays licensure – outside of the applicant's or department's control
- Most U.S. jurisdictions already offer a temporary license when “transferring” from another state to ensure professionals are able to get to work quickly
- Under UTL, the department will be able to issue qualified professionals a temporary license
 - Temporary license will be part of the permanent licensure process to avoid duplicative paperwork
 - Qualified professionals will be able to begin working more quickly
 - The department will consult the board (if applicable) if there is a question about applicant's qualification



Universal Temporary Licensure (Cont.)

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How Do We Know UTL Will Help?

- The Alaska State Medical Board and Alaska Board of Nursing led the way in making temporary permits part of the permanent licensure process, and it works extremely well
 - Allows physicians, physician assistants, registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses to get to work more quickly while we wait on items from third-parties (such as verifications of work experience, verifications of hospital privileges, etc.)
- Previously, applicants would have to specify if they wanted a temporary license when submitting their application for a permanent license or apply for it separately from the permanent license
- Medical and nursing professionals, hospitals, and health care facilities are happier under this current process
- We currently have similar provisions available to active-duty military members and their spouses under AS 08.01.063 (*due to SB 21 passed in 2021*)



Universal Temporary Licensure (Cont.)

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UTL vs. Compacts

Source: Council of State Governments

Criteria	Universal Licensure Recognition Laws	Interstate Licensure Compacts
Requires practitioners to abide by the scope of practice of the state in which they are practicing	✓	✓
Allows for expeditious interstate movement of practitioners during emergencies	✓	✓
Reduces barriers for out-of-state practitioners aiming to practice within a state	✓ ¹	✓
Reduces barriers for in-state practitioners intending to practice in other state(s)	✗	✓
Allows military spouses to maintain a single home state license for the duration of the service member's active duty, regardless of relocations, without submitting a separate application to each state's licensure board	✗	✓ ²
Allows practitioners to work in multiple states, both in person and via telehealth/telework, without submitting a separate application to each state's licensure board, requiring verification of the current license or obtaining a new background check	✗	✓
Brings together a coalition of states to establish consistent and enforceable interstate licensure standards tailored to the public protection requirements of a given profession	✗	✓
Enhances public protection by creating a multistate database of licensure information to facilitate collaboration on license verification and investigations of potential misconduct	✗	✓
Allows multistate practice without requiring practitioners to change state of residence	Sometimes ¹	✓ ³
Allows practitioners to work in multiple states while adhering to only one state's continuing education requirements and license renewal schedule	✗	✓

¹ Some states—such as Arizona and Iowa—have universal licensure recognition laws that require practitioners to reside in the state, while others—such as Colorado and Idaho—do not.

² This is true only if practitioners relocate to a compact member state. License verification is based on practitioners complying with compact criteria for privilege to practice in another member state.

³ This is applicable when practitioners travel from one compact member state to another.



Universal Temporary Licensure

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What are the licensure portability laws under the SCRA?

- The Servicemember Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is a federal law that was amended in January 2023 to create the licensure portability requirements for U.S. jurisdictions
 - Requirements were then amended, effective March 23, 2025
- Requires all U.S. jurisdictions to issue a permanent license to an applicant who:
 - Has military orders to Alaska (or is the spouse of servicemember with orders to Alaska)
 - Submits an application for the license and pays the fee
 - Has been licensed in the profession in another U.S. jurisdiction
 - Is in good standing with all U.S. jurisdictions where they are, or have ever been licensed
 - Provides notarized statement affirming that they:
 - Have read and understand the scope of practice for Alaska
 - Meet and shall comply with all SCRA licensure portability requirements and will comply with scope of practice laws in Alaska

NOTE: Licensure under SCRA is not applicable to a profession that is subject to an interstate licensure compact Alaska has entered into, if the professional has been licensed in another state in that Compact, per federal law.



Federal SCRA Licensure Portability Laws

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Is the Division issuing licenses under SCRA now?

Yes. The division has been issuing licenses under SCRA since July 2024 in compliance with federal law.

Permanent licenses issued under SCRA (as of Friday, April 25th):

Certified Public Accountant	1	Professional Counselor	2
Clinical Social Worker	3	Physician	15
Master Social Worker	2	Osteopathic Physician	3
Dentist	5	Physician Assistant	4
Dental Hygienist	1	Advanced Practice Registered Nurse	4
Esthetician	1	Practical Nurse	5
Hairdresser	2	Registered Nurse	30
Tattooing	1	Certified Nurse Aide	2
Marital & Family Therapist	2	Pharmacist	1
Physical Therapist	1	Veterinarian	1
Occupational Therapist	1	Veterinary Technician	1
Optometrist	1	TOTAL	89



Federal SCRA Licensure Portability Laws (Cont.)

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Why do we need to do this if SCRA is in federal law?

Very helpful for division, its 21 licensing boards, and the public if SCRA is codified into Alaska law:

- Ensures there are no contradictions with the federal statute
- Allows Alaska licensees and applicants to clearly see the options for licensure, and requirements for each pathway to licensure
- Provides clarity in Alaska law when a license is “issued under SCRA”

NOTE: The federal SCRA licensure portability law took effect in January 2023, one year after the Alaska Military Temporary licenses (created by SB 21 in 2021) took effect:

- *Since Alaska started issuing permanent licenses under SCRA, military professionals are no longer interested in the military temporary license under AS 08.01.063, making it obsolete*

HB 158 proposes replacing military temporary licenses with:

- Universal Temporary Licensure; and
- Permanent licensure under SCRA (already in effect)



Federal SCRA Licensure Portability Laws (Cont.)

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Thank You!

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