



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS, AND
PROFESSIONAL LICENSING**

**Nurse Licensure Compact in Alaska
SB 67**

February 2021



What Problems Does the NLC Solve?

- An initial Alaska nurse license can cost over \$500.
- A license can take months to process because of errors in completing the application and delays in documentation from schools and other states.
- Patient care is delayed when qualified nurses are not available.
- Nurses lose income when they must wait weeks to months for a license.
- Emergency situations create greater need for nurses and bottlenecks in licensing.
- The U.S. Department of Defense has declared that military location and expansion decisions will be dependent upon participation in license compacts and reciprocity agreements.



Vacancies in Alaska's Nursing Workforce

ALASKA STATE HOSPITAL & NURSING HOME ASSOCIATION

ASHNHA reported **670** vacancies in nursing positions in 2019.

Since April, **324** emergency courtesy nursing licenses have been issued.





What is the Nurse Licensure Compact?

- **Voluntary multi-state licensing agreement.**
- Allows mobility for highly qualified nurses to work in member states.
- **Retains state authority over nursing scope of practice and discipline.**
- Eliminates the time-consuming, expensive, redundant nurse licensing process.
- **Reduces the delay and expense of filling vacancies in health care facilities.**
- Improves patient outcomes by increasing opportunity for adequate staffing.
- **Reciprocates the privilege for Alaska nurses.**
- Retains nursing students by offering more opportunities.
- Currently, **34 states/territories participate in the NLC** with legislation proposed in another **12**: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Guam.



Why Should Alaska Join the NLC?

Joining the NLC will **strengthen the state's healthcare delivery system** by:

- reducing barriers to licensure;
- expediting skilled nurses when positions are vacant;
- increasing opportunities for nurses within and outside Alaska; and
- reducing costs to individuals and facilities.

Had the NLC been in effect when the COVID-19 pandemic began:

- **expenses** to healthcare facilities, individual healthcare providers, and state government **could have been reduced**;
- **treatment could have been provided more quickly** in the areas of greatest need; and
- Alaska's nurses wouldn't have been so overworked.



Why Should Alaska Join the NLC?

The NLC requirements to obtain a multistate license are rigorous and **exceed the current standards under Alaska law**, supporting high quality care for all Alaskans.

The Board of Nursing will retain its ability and authority to oversee and enforce nursing practice in Alaska. Joining the NLC does not dilute or detract from the board's power in any way.

Once adopted, Alaska would become a **voting member of the NLC commission** with rulemaking, enforcement, and financial assessment provisions. In addition to a grant to cover start-up, **multistate license fees will pay for their own program expenses.**

Because the language required to join the NLC is uniform and enacted in statute, the NLC high standards for licensure **cannot be changed without the agreement of the Alaska State Legislature.**



Additional Benefits of Joining the NLC

- Reduces cost and burden on employers in Alaska.
- Expedites disaster relief.
- Increases access to care for Alaskans.
- Increases telehealth options for Alaskans.
- Adds options to keep Alaskan-trained nurses in state.
- Expands employment opportunities for Alaskan nurses.
- Facilitates online education.
- Offers seasonal employee flexibility.
- Eases costs and burden for military families.
- Increases economic opportunities for military base selections or expansions.
- Reduces cost and burden on nurses moving or transferring to Alaska.





NLC Requirements vs. Alaska Requirements

NLC	ALASKA
1. Meets the requirements for licensure in the home state**	N/A
2. a. Has graduated from a board-approved education program; or b. Has graduated from an international education program	YES
3. Has passed an English proficiency examination	NO
4. Has passed an NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN Examination or predecessor exam	YES
5. Is eligible for or holds an active, unencumbered license	N/A
6. Has submitted to state and federal fingerprint-based criminal background checks	YES
7. Has not been convicted or found guilty, or has entered into an agreed disposition, of a felony offense under applicable state or federal criminal law	NO
8. Has no misdemeanor convictions related to the practice of nursing	NO
9. Is not currently a participant in an alternative program	NO
10. Is required to self-disclose current participation in an alternative program	NO
11. Has a valid United States Social Security Number	NO



Who Supports Alaska Joining the NLC?

December 2019 survey of Alaska-licensed registered and practical nurses (over 16,000) and received 3,573 responses:

- **92% of respondents support Alaska joining the NLC** (*3% opposed; 4% had no opinion*).
- **89% of respondents with primary residency in Alaska support joining the NLC** (*5% opposed, 6% had no opinion*).
- **87% of respondents who are members of a union support joining the NLC** (*8% opposed, 6% had no opinion*).

The full survey and results can be provided upon request.



Who Supports Alaska Joining the NLC?

Partial list of Alaska supporters:

- Alaska Board of Nursing (2019, 2021)
- Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA)
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC)

- Alaska Regional Hospital
- Bartlett Regional Hospital
- Providence Alaska Medical Center
- U.S. Renal Care
- Fresenius Kidney Care

- U.S. Department of Defense
- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
- Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
- Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
- 92% of Alaska-licensed nurses



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