



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

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

**Division of Corporations, Business and
Professional Licensing**

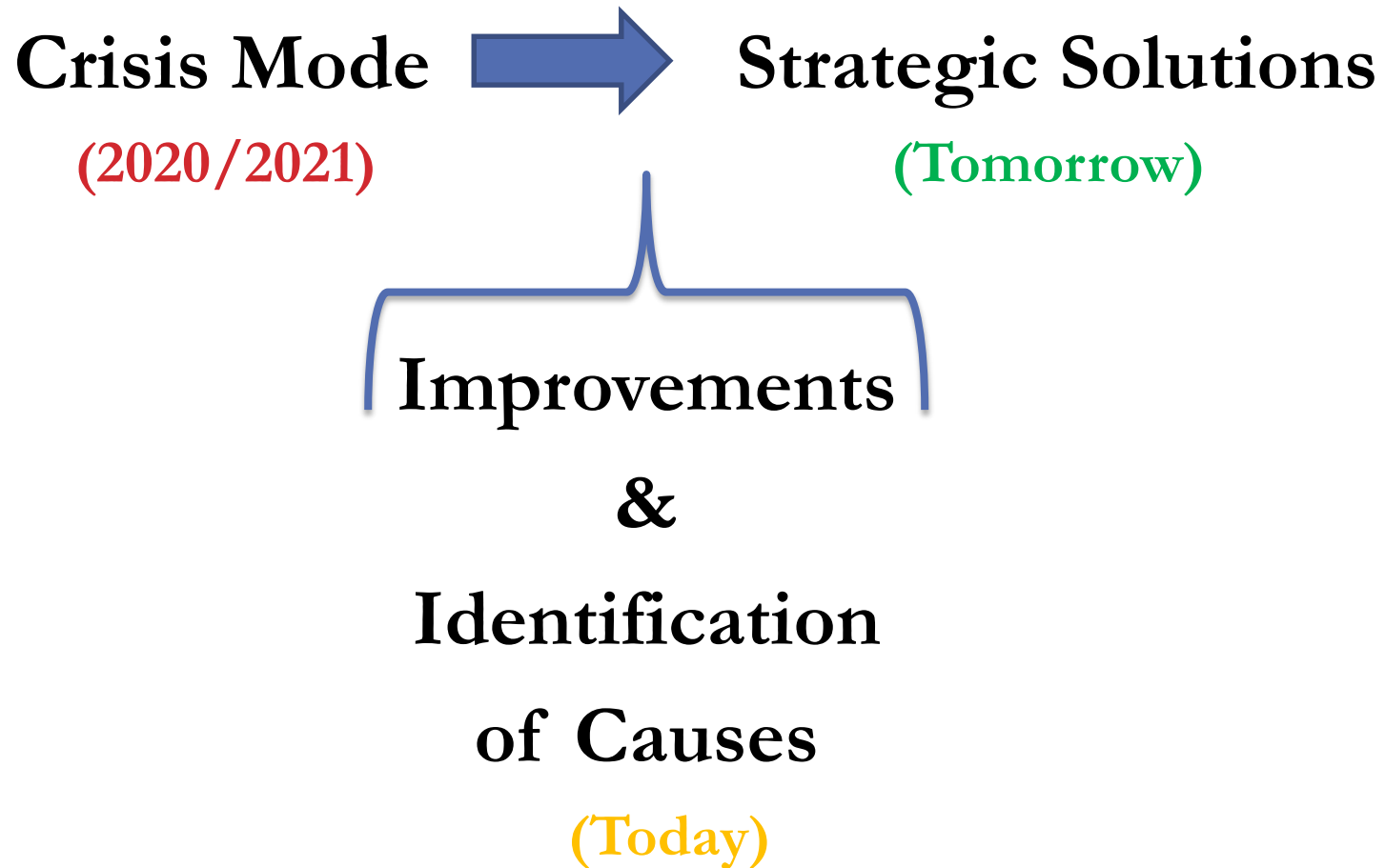
**House Labor & Commerce Committee
Professional Licensing Update and the
Case for Professional Licensing Reform**

Sara Chambers, Division Director

March 21, 2022



Professional Licensing: Current Status





FY2021 by the Numbers

Professional licensing

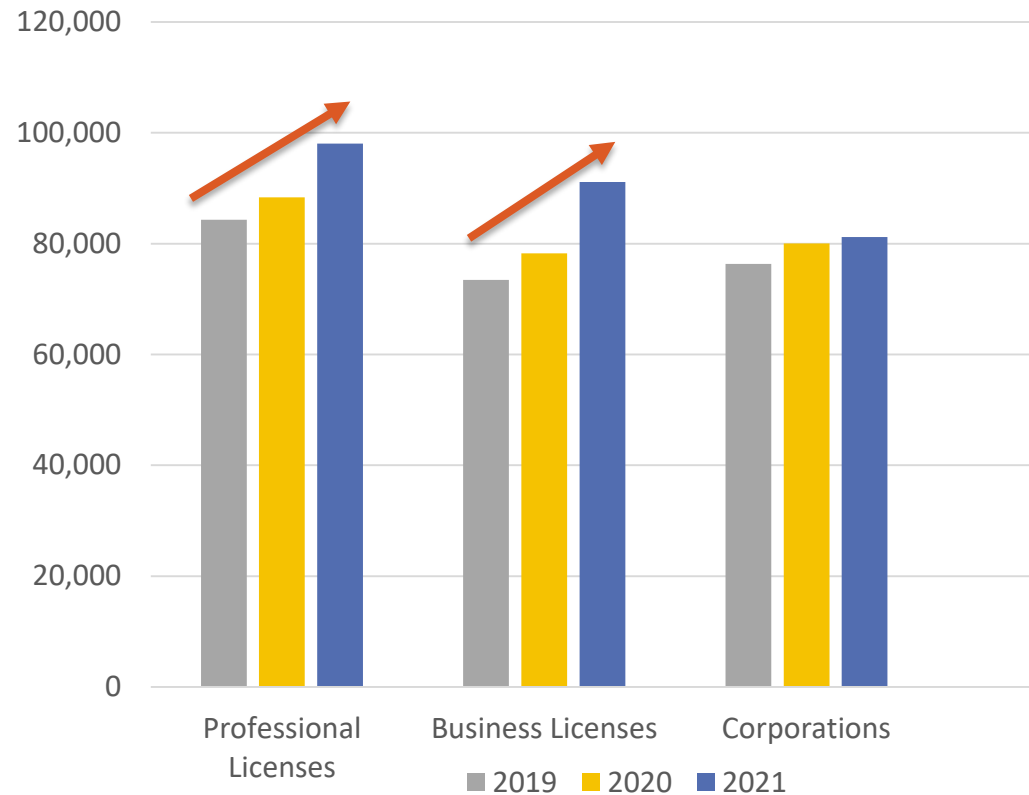
- 43 programs, including 21 boards
- 98,068 professional licenses
- **9.67% increase in FY21**

Business licensing

- 91,114 business licenses
- 1497 nicotine endorsements
- **16.4% increase in FY21**

Corporations

- 81,187 registered corporations





Testimonials from Professionals

“Due to a staffing issue, people can not get licensed in a timely manner. Businesses can not grow or expand, homes can not get sold, and families can not get into the new home.” – **Real Estate Appraiser License Applicant**

“I am a suicide prevention trainer, I have taken multiple continuing education training seminars in trauma-informed care, and I have worked for multiple years providing individual, group and family therapies. Now I want to be able to extend my services, especially to serve veterans... but I find myself unable to expand until I am licensed. Even with extended wait times, having started my application process in February, and understanding that the licensing board may also be struggling with lack of employees, I feel that the time my application is taking is excessive.” – **Professional Counselor License Applicant**

“The State of Alaska’s Board of Veterinary Examiners has continually restricted our ability to onboard relief and full-time Doctors of Veterinary Medicine because such professionals are unable to receive their licensing in a timely manner. On average it is taking doctors over ninety days to receive their license to practice.” – **Veterinary Medical Center**

“As you know, licensing is not transferable. While she is licensed in both Hawaii and New York (She worked in Brooklyn during the height of COVID), she has had to apply for a license to work in Alaska... My daughter has a job starting today, Monday, Dec 6th at Providence but in spite of having started the AK license process months ago, she still has not received her license. She can’t start work until this license comes through and she is frankly without recourse.” – **Mother of a Nurse License Applicant**

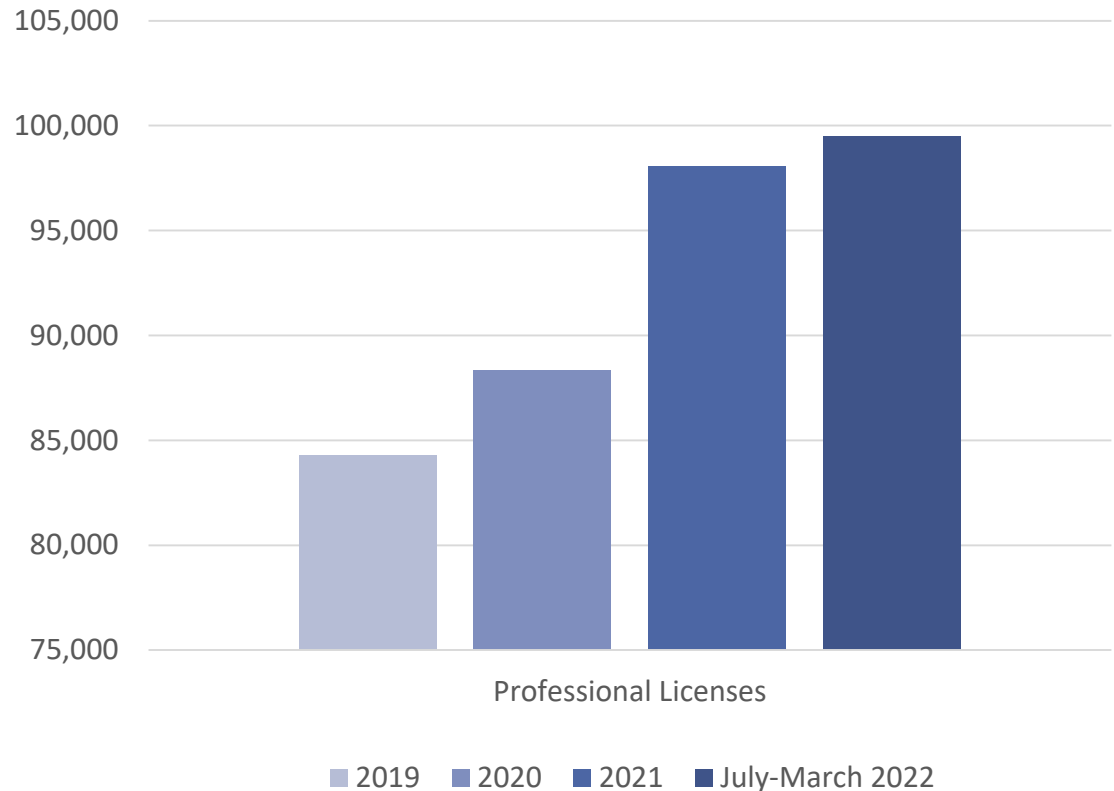
“My renewal application was submitted and paid for August 23, 2021. I received an email about my “Yes answer docs” on September 20, 2021, to which I submitted requested documents the very same day via email. As of right now per last correspondence (October 11, 2021) my license is pending review by a supervisor and that I would be notified via email. It is now November 26, 2021, and my renewal is still in review.” – **Licensed Massage Therapist**

“In this time of severe nursing shortages it shouldn’t take over 7 months to return my wife’s license to Alaska. Without resolution, a severely understaffed facility will be down another caregiver and I’ll probably be forced to leave my critical gov’t job to return to the lower 48.” – **Husband of a Nurse License Applicant**



Current Professional Licensing Statistics

FY20 Total License Count	% Change From FY19
89,422	4.78%
FY21 Total License Count	% Change From FY20
98,068	9.67%
License Count as of 3/11/22	% Change From FY21 (through 3/11/22)
99,495	1.46%





Current Professional Licensing Statistics

Program	Average Length of Time Between Document Submission and Examiner Review	Number of Budgeted Examiner Positions Assigned to the Program	Number of Examiner Vacancies at the Time of this Report	Number of New Examiners in the Last 12 Months	Percent New or Vacant at the Time of this Report	Licenses per Examiner
Construction Contractors	7 weeks	2	0	1	50%	4,590
Dental	6 weeks	1	0	0	0%	4,918
Electrical/Mechanical Administrators	10+ weeks	1	1	0	100%	1,495
Medical	8 weeks	3	0	2	66%	2,758
Nursing	6 weeks	6	1	2	50%	4,410



Immediate Internal Strategies (2021)

Workflow improvements:

- Customer Service Center
- Non-permanent administrative assistance
- Additional examiner for nurse licensing
- Consolidation of real estate programs on one team
- Shift of assignments among staff to balance workload
- Successful implementation of telework



Immediate Internal Strategies (2022)

Administrative Order to Refocus Staff Assignments on Core Licensing Functions:

Under a forthcoming Administrative Order, we will put a “pause” non-statutorily or regulatorily required practices and activities, including:

- Reducing administrative support for board activities unrelated to immediate licensing or enforcement;
- Eliminating duplicate and courtesy notifications to applicants;
- Postponing ministerial paperwork functions; and
- Postponing production of various reports, staff travel, and committee participation.



Long-Term Internal Strategies

Updating Infrastructure

- Modernizing licensing technology
 - Addition of AI components to automate customer experience
 - Improved customer communication and email functionality
 - Dashboard to track processing times and license completion
- Restructure of professional licensing teams for greater support
 - Promotional ladder within the division
 - Pay matches position description and duties
 - Retention of skilled staff with valuable institutional memory
- Ongoing review and streamlining of burdensome board regulations



Building a Right-Touch-Regulated Workforce

Council of State Governments report on occupational licensing resiliency

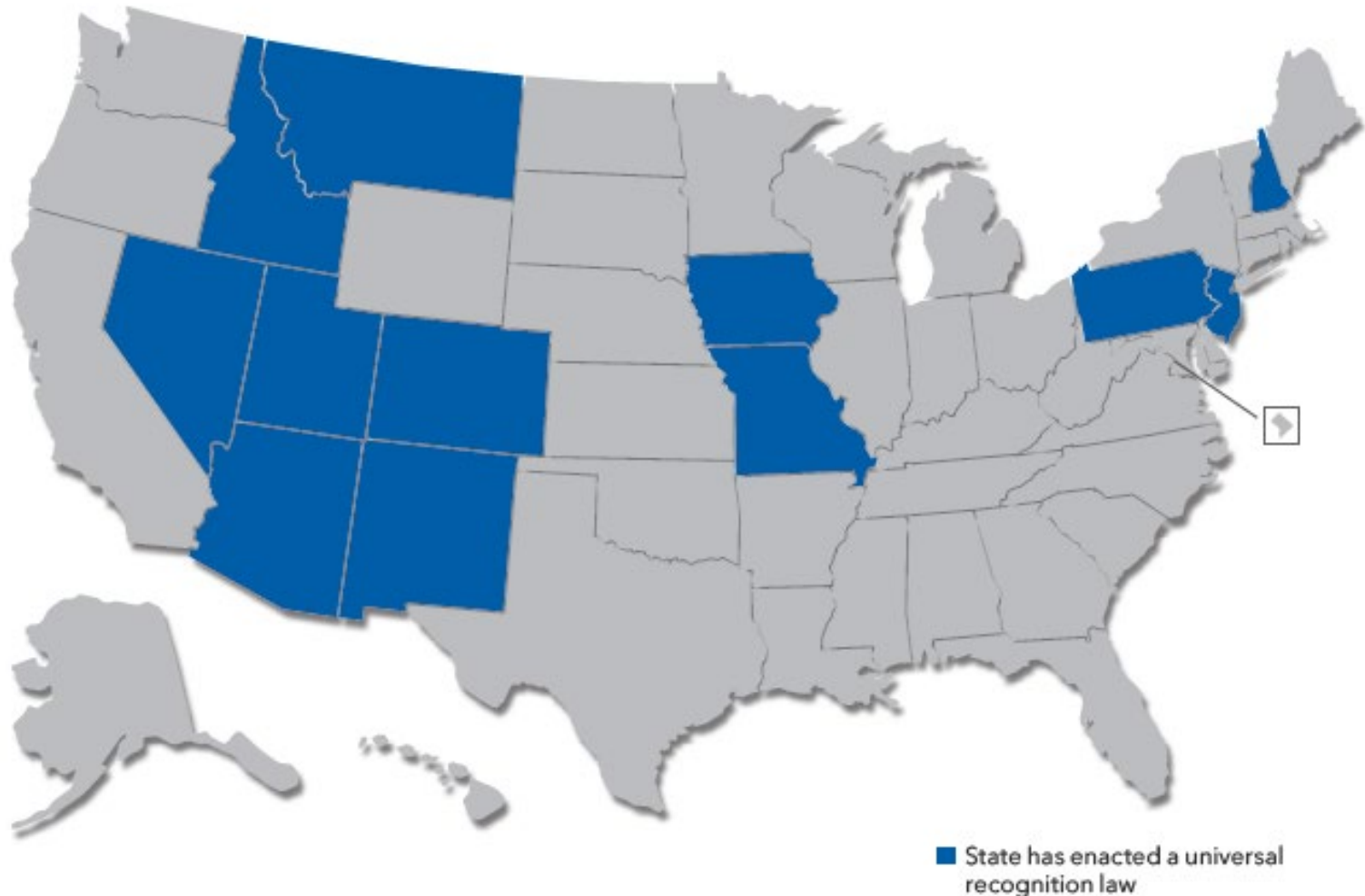
- Implement online licensing systems
- Expand license portability laws
- Join interstate licensing compacts
- Expand licensee scope of practice
- Authorize distance delivery (telehealth, continuing education)
- Consider permanency of emergency policies
- Plan for future emergencies/workforce shortages

CSG, OCCUPATIONAL LICENSURE 2020 REPORT



Building a Right-Touch-Regulated Workforce

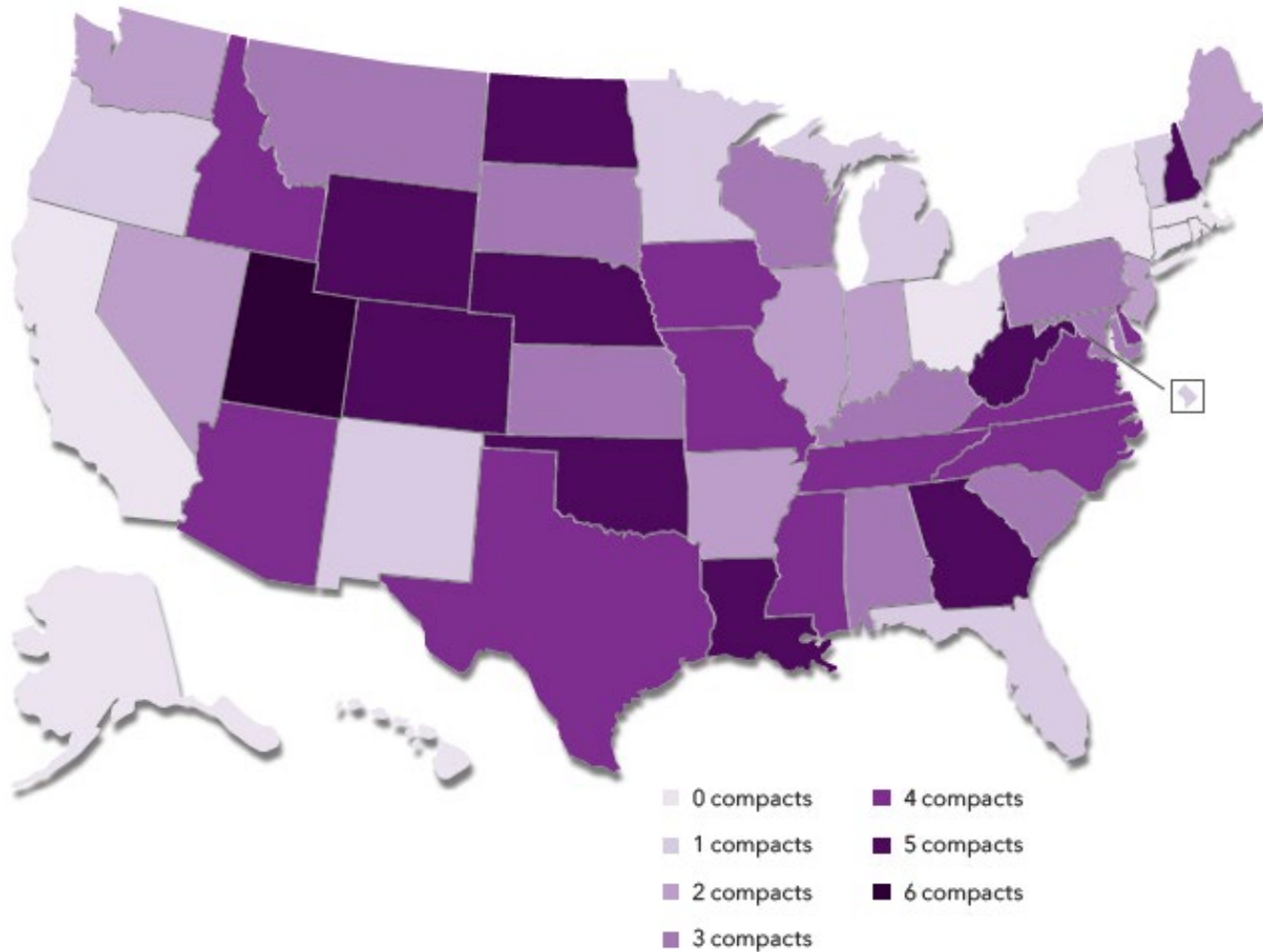
Universal Recognition Laws





Building a Right-Touch-Regulated Workforce

Active Interstate Licensure Compacts





Building a Right-Touch-Regulated Workforce

Current laws are not designed for today's transient, flexible workforce.
Licensing systems are not intended or designed to provide instant licensure.
Policy makers—legislators and boards—must identify and implement change.

Opportunities:

Legislature	Licensing Boards
Telehealth licensing (forthcoming HB 265/SB 175)	Eliminate unnecessary requirements
Adopt streamlined licensing for qualified applicants (forthcoming)	Utilize reputable national resources to reduce redundant requirements
Eliminate outdated statutes (forthcoming)	Make data-driven decisions
Adopt licensing compacts (HB 83/SB 157)	



Contact Information

Thank you!

Sara Chambers, Director

Sara.Chambers@alaska.gov

(907) 465-2144

Glenn Hoskinson, Deputy Director

Glenn.Hoskinson@alaska.gov

(907) 465-2691