



U.S. Department of Defense

# 2023 Key Personnel and Readiness Issues Supporting Service Members and Families

ALASKA STATUS AS OF February 1, 2023

**Licensing Compacts:** Many military spouse professionals must relicense each time they move to a new state with their active-duty spouse. States can facilitate the ability of professionals, including military spouses, to work across state lines by enacting occupational licensure interstate compacts. **We recommend 13 occupation specific compacts.**

**Defining Armed Forces in State Policy:** Recent force structure changes require updates to ensure that states' definitions of military service comport with federal law. States can minimize disruptions in benefits and services for eligible service members and dependents by clearly defining "armed forces." **Alaska is home to over 22,000 active duty service members.**

**Enhanced Military Spouse Licensure Portability:** Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific licensure requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment. States can streamline state licensing processes for relocating military spouses by providing them with a license within 30 days with minimal initial paperwork. (SB 21 passed in 2021)

**Military Spouse Occupational Licensure Access:** Accessing applications for military spouses is often a barrier to making use of the state laws that are designed to ease license transfer. States can reduce obstacles spouses experience when applying under state laws by posting easily accessible website content specific to military spouses. (<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/MilitaryLicensing.aspx>)

**Purple Star Schools Program:** Military children experience many challenges as they relocate to new schools due to a parent's change in duty station. By establishing statewide Purple Star Schools programs, states can encourage local education agencies to implement practices that assist military children with transitions/deployments and also recognize military service and civic responsibility. (<https://education.alaska.gov/purplestaraward>)

**Open Enrollment Flexibility:** Military families are at a disadvantage when it comes to the enrollment options available to their children due to military-directed reassignments. States can provide military families with increased flexibility through access to district open enrollment policies. **(Review Open Enrollment Policies)**

**Military and Family Life Counselor Licensure:** The state licensure process can be a barrier to providing timely mental health support to service members and families. States can provide a licensure waiver for military and family life counselors to allow for mental health care as needed. **Alaska currently expedites this licensure. We recommend further improvements through the adoption of the Counseling Compact.**

**Child Abuse Identification and Reporting:** DOD has a statutory obligation to address child abuse and neglect within the military. States can assist the department by requiring local jurisdictions to identify military families and develop reporting and information-sharing procedures between civilian child protective services and military child advocacy.

**Concurrent Juvenile Jurisdiction:** Exclusive federal jurisdiction on military installations can send juveniles through an adult judicial system. Access to state juvenile and family courts may allow for more suitable outcomes. State lawmakers can remove these barriers and pursue solutions that support military families. **(Final Status Pending Review)**

**Licensure Exemptions for Military Family Child Care Providers:** In many cases, military family child care providers must be licensed or registered by the state in addition to the military. By exempting providers already certified through the military, states enhance the economic status of both the providers and families.