

2019

Military Service Member and Military Spouse Licensing Report

DECEMBER 2019

Report Requirement

Senate Bill 5359, adopted during the 2017 regular legislative session, charged the Department of Licensing (the Department) and the Department of Health to file a report to the legislature biennially and the Washington State military transition council annually beginning January 1, 2018, to provide updates on progress in our efforts to implement the requirements of chapter 18.340 RCW, chapter 23, Laws of 2011, and chapter 351, Laws of 2011.

This report contains background information and updates on progress efforts.

Background Information

The Department issues professional and business licenses for 36 non-health related programs.

There are approximately 275,000 active professional licensees and about 38,000 active business licensees.

For professional licenses, the department ensures individuals meet or exceed the minimum qualifications before being licensed. The department reviews education and experience, administers examinations, conducts background checks, and ensures continuing education requirements are met.

Professional licenses regulated by the department are as follows:

- Architects
- Auctioneers
- Bail Bond Agents and Bail Recovery Agents
- Tattooing, Body Art & Body Piercing
- Camping Resort Sales
- Combative Sports
- Cosmetologists
- Court Reporters
- Driver Training School Instructors
- Funeral Directors and Embalmers
- Geologists
- Home Inspectors
- Landscape Architects
- Notaries Public
- Private Investigators
- Real Estate Brokers
- Real Estate Appraisers
- Security Guards
- Timeshare Sales

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After license issuance, the department's regulatory functions include conducting audits and inspections and resolving complaints with or without administrative action. When warranted, the department may take appropriate administrative action that includes fines, license denials, suspensions and revocations.

The department also provides information, engages in education of licensees or the public, and conducts outreach efforts.

Professional licensees generally experience very little delay in getting their license applications approved. The Department has an average of 90% on-time for processing licensee applications. Many of the Department's licensee programs have comity with other jurisdictions (reciprocity). This makes it easier for individuals from other states to transfer their licenses into Washington, to include military spouses.

Most Department of Licensing professions are regulated under authority of the Director. The following have regulatory Boards:

- Architect Board
- Collection Agency Board
- Funeral and Cemetery Board
- Geologist Board
- Landscape Architects Board

Progress and future steps

Rulemaking:

The department is currently engaged in rulemaking related to professional and business licensing for military service members and military spouses. These rules will codify and adopt long-standing policies and best practices and implement RCWs 18.340.020 and 43.24.130 and Executive Order 19-01. Specifically these rules will codify the following practices:

- Expedited processing of military personnel and military spouse professional license applications;
- Issuance of temporary professional licenses for military spouses awaiting permanent licensure; and
- Changing an active professional license to either military status or inactive status for military personnel and military spouses.

The department filed the Proposal (CR 102) for this rule effort on December 3, 2019 and the public hearing will be held on January 7, 2020. The draft rule language was shared with various external military stakeholders including the Washington State Military Transition and Readiness Council. Anticipated effective date will be in June 2020 to coincide with the launch of the agency's business technology modernization effort, POLARIS.

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The first phase of POLARIS included the regulatory board professions and notary publics; the rest of the professions will launch in late spring 2020. The new system allows applicants to self-identify as a military service member or military spouse directly on the application. This indicator will allow staff to identify the application for expedited processing and provide for statistics specifically to this population.

Other activities DOL is engaged in regarding serving military members and their spouses include:

- Since 2013, DOL assisted with the establishment of the Washington State Veteran Employee Resource Group (VERG) and continues to participate. Since 2014, DOL established and maintained its own internal VERG. Both groups have assisted, coached, and mentored hundreds of transitioning service members and their spouses with State employment and further career progress. These groups have been involved in hiring events and employment workshops resulting in DOL being awarded the YesVets designation by the Washington State Employment Security Department.
- DOL Representatives attend career fairs – many are related specifically to military members and spouses.
- DOL co-chairs a Washington State Military Transition Council workgroup regarding license portability for military spouses and veterans. We also participate on the WSMTC work group regarding military spouse employment and professional development.
 - Workgroup is focusing on improving access to web-based license and certificate information for veterans and military spouses and creating an inventory of licenses and certificates in Washington. The workgroup will also identify which licenses are priorities for veterans and military spouses.
 - The workgroup will continue to discuss best practices amongst the agencies; especially around getting information to military spouses about the services the state offers.

The Department is open to feedback and suggestions on how to better serve military members and their spouses.