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 biennial report to the legislature. The Washington State Military Transition Council, beginning January 1, 2018, annually reports 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 39 non-health related programs. There are approximately 325,000 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, reviews 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
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.

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 completed rulemaking related to professional and business licensing for military service members and military spouses. These rules codified and adopted long-standing policies and best practices, and implemented RCWs 18.340.020 and 43.24.130 and Executive Order 19-01. Specifically these rules codified 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 Adoption (CR 103) on June 11, 2020 and it went into effect on July 12, 2020. The rule language was shared with various external military stakeholders including the Washington State Military Transition and Readiness Council.
Technology Updates:

At the end of June 2020, the Department launched the final phase of its business & professional licensing technology modernization effort, POLARIS. The system was configured to incorporate the military rules and allows the agency to more closely track the number of current/former military members, and military spouses, applying for and receiving DOL licenses. Other benefits of the POLARIS system include online application, online complaints, online payments, and integrates licensing, compliance, and financial management into one system.

Data Reporting:

Prior to POLARIS, the Department only had anecdotal information on the number of licensees/applicants who were current or former military members and spouses. The POLARIS system allows the Department to keep better metrics around these numbers because each program application has a self-attestation check box that the applicant can check. This allows the Department to run reports showing the number of applicants/licensees who select the boxes.

Preliminary data (as of 10/29/2020) suggests there are at least 703 self-identified active military member or spouse/partner licensees. There is some duplication where someone is both a member and a spouse/partner.

Data by profession:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>members</th>
<th>spouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appraisers - Real Estate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architects</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Body Art and Body Piercing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Commercial Driver’s License</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cosmetology</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Court Reporters</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driver Training School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geologist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>members</td>
<td>spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Inspector</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycle Safety</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notary Public</td>
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<td>Private Investigator</td>
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<td>Real Estate</td>
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<td>Security Guards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeshares</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>703</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COVID-19 and System Implementation Impacts:

Like many state agencies, the Department largely began working remotely in March 2020. The Department continues to work remotely to limit the spread of COVID-19. In addition to this, the Department launched POLARIS in June; completely remotely. These events have had a significant impact on the agency’s ability to serve our customers, including military members and their spouse, efficiently. For the Business & Professions Division these impacts include delays to process new and renewal applications in most of our licensing programs. The Department is committed to working through the business processes contributing to these delays to ensure customers get their licenses as quickly as possible so they can get to work.

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

- Since 2013, DOL assisted with the establishment, and continued participation with, the Washington State Veteran Employee Resource Group (VERG). 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. Washington State Employment Security Department awarded DOL the YesVets designation in connection with involvement in hiring events and employment workshops.

- DOL Representatives attend career fairs – many specifically related to career opportunities for military members and spouses. (Note: these efforts stalled in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions).

- DOL co-chairs a Washington State Military Transition Council (WSMTC) 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 offered by the state.