



Compacts 101

What are the types of compacts?

Compacts are formal agreements between states and territories that are enacted through legislation. Language that is adopted in a compact is uniform across all compact states and territories and can only be modified through agreement between all participating members (or a termination of a state's participation). States can utilize compacts as a legal relationship to address an issue on a variety of topics including health topics. Compacts can be used to address any issue where states have a need to coordinate across state and territory borders. For example, there are compacts in place to achieve activities such as solving boundary disputes, managing shared natural resources, or building resilience to natural disasters. There are also compacts related to higher education, such as the [Western Regional Education Compact](#) through the Western Interstate Commission, which supports cooperative delivery of quality higher education in Western states. According to the Council for State Governments ([CSG](#)), "every state is a member of at least one compact. There are over 250 active compacts in the U.S., and on average states have enacted about 25." Information on this page is focused on health licensure compacts.

What are licensure compacts?

Licensure compacts are formal agreements between states that are enacted through legislation in each member state or territory to support portability of qualified health professionals and reduce barriers to practice between state lines.

Health-related licensure compacts fall into one of three types:

1. Multi-state License

- a. What is it?
 - i. Professionals obtain a single license in their home state that enables them to practice in all Compact-participating states without additional action.
- b. Which professions have this type of compact?
 - i. [Nurse Licensure Compact](#)
 - ii. [Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact](#) (currently has two states that have enacted the legislation; not active until seven states have enacted legislation)

2. Privilege-to-Practice

- a. What is it?
 - i. Professionals obtain a single license in their home state then apply for privilege to practice in other Compact participating states.
- b. Which professions have this type of compact?
 - i. [Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact](#)
 - ii. [Dentist & Dental Hygienist Compact](#) (in development)
 - iii. [Emergency Medical Services Compact](#)
 - iv. [PSYpact](#)
 - v. [PT Compact](#)

3. Expedited License Review

- a. Professionals wishing to participate in this Compact would undergo an expedited process for license application/renewal but would be required to obtain separate licenses in all states where they will practice.
- b. Which professions have this type of compact?
 - i. [Interstate Medical Licensure Compact](#) for Physicians

What is the role of the governor with respect to interstate compacts?

- Governors play an important role when it comes to authorization of licensure compacts through the ultimate enactment of licensure compact legislation.
- Governors regularly review health workforce-related compacts and become familiar with those in which their states actively participate. To explore which health workforce related compacts a state participates in, click [here](#).
- If considering participation in a compact, governors could also explore complementary workforce data strategies that support a state/jurisdiction's ability to monitor health care professionals practicing within the state (for both compact-participating and non compact-participating professionals).

Resources:

- Interstate Compacts: An Overview. Congressional Research Service. Available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/LSB/LSB10807>
- National Center for Interstate Compacts, Council of State Governments. Available at: <https://compacts.csg.org/>